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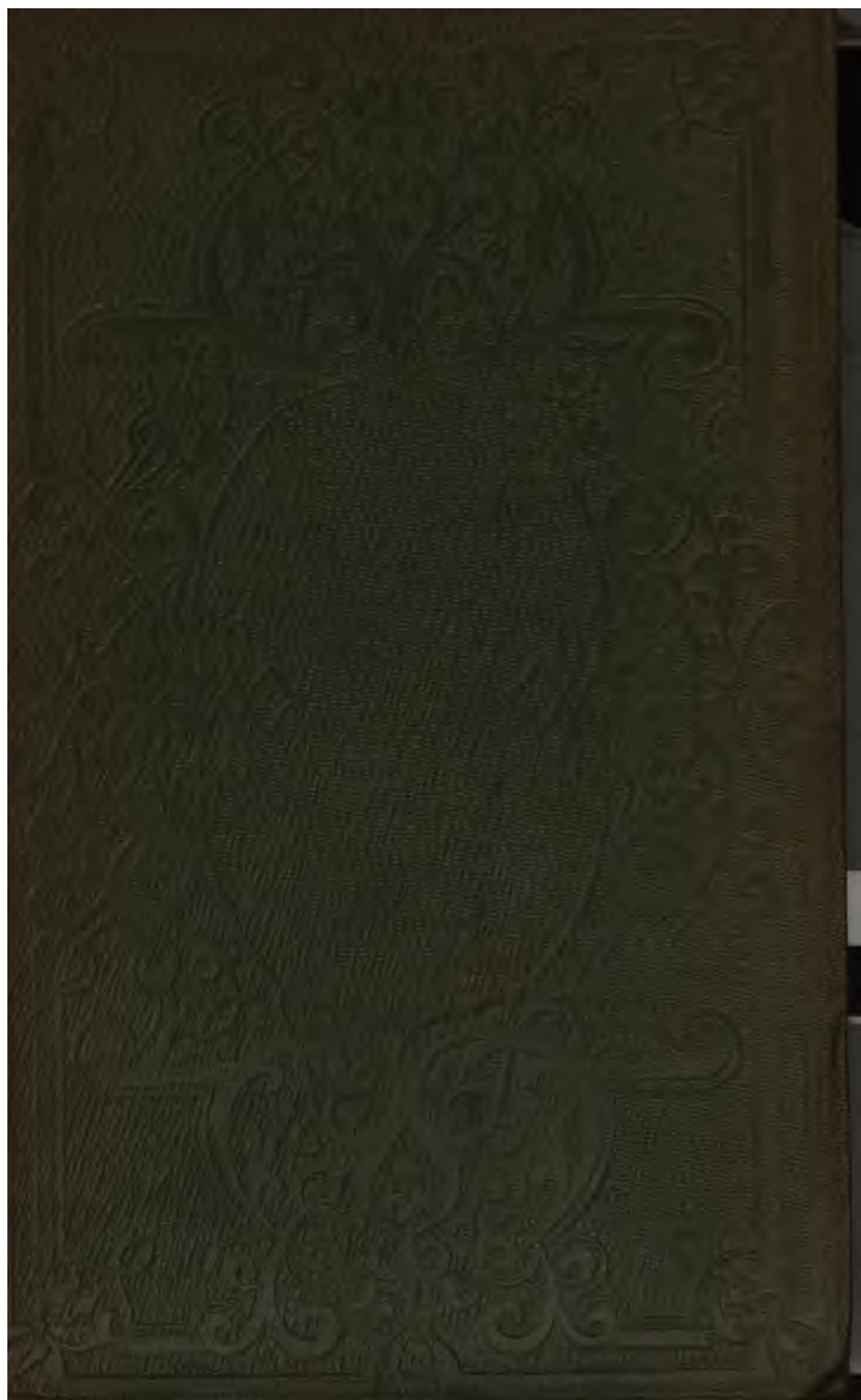
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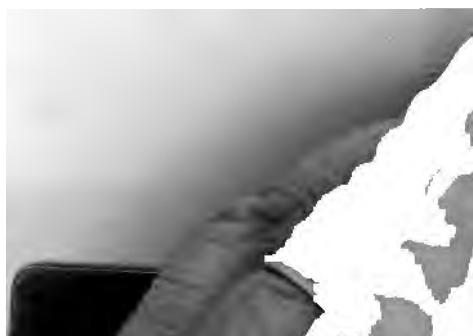
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**THE**  
**AMERICANS AT HOME.**





THE  
AMERICANS AT HOME;

OR,

BYEWAYS, BACKWOODS, AND PRAIRIES.

EDITED BY

THE AUTHOR OF "SAM SLICK."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THIS work is designed as a companion to "Traits of American Humour." The sketches it contains are confined, as expressed in the title-page, to the Byeways, Backwoods, and Prairies. The large cities and vast rivers and railroads of the United States are not only well known to all tourists, but to the reading public generally. Unfortunately travellers, on account of the facility, safety, and comfort of transit, confine themselves to the great public thoroughfares, whereby they add but little to the stock of information they previously possessed. The peculiarities of the people, their modes of thinking, living, and acting, are principally to be sought for in the rural districts, where

unrestrained freedom of action, and the incidents and requirements of a forest life, encourage and give room for the development of character in its fullest extent.

The populous towns are so similar in their general aspect and structure, that a description of any one city will commonly be found applicable in the main to every other in the same State. Age, gradual or premature, is apparent in all. The people have become homogeneous. Staid and settled habits have superseded the foreign modes introduced by a heterogeneous mass of emigrants, and the bustle of building and settling has given place to the indispensable cares and duties of life. Collision soon wears off angularity, the surface is rendered smooth, and a certain degree of polish, according to the texture of the materials, is the natural result. Society has its conventional rules, which it rigidly enforces. Hence in every community men dress alike, think alike, and act alike, except in such cases, where by the same rules they are allowed to agree or to disagree.

In the country, and especially that portion situated on the confines of the forest, man, on

the contrary, is under no such restraint. He is almost beyond the reach of the law, and altogether exempt from the control, or utterly ignorant or regardless of those observances, which public opinion demands and enforces. The only society he knows or acknowledges is that of his own family. He enacts the laws that are to regulate his household. He governs, but owns no obedience. His neighbours, if those can be so called who live several miles from him, aid him in those emergencies for which his individual strength is insufficient, or sustain him in those trials that require the sympathy and kindness of his fellow-creatures, while they occasionally unite with him in hunting, fishing, drinking, or carousing.

These pioneers do not, as might be supposed, so much present samples of a class, as a collection of isolated independent individuals, whose characters are distinguished alike for being both strongly developed and yet widely dissimilar. Nevertheless there are many striking peculiarities that pervade the entire population. They all have the virtues and the vices inseparable from un-

restrained liberty. They are bold, hardy, manly, hospitable, generous, and kind-hearted; while, at the same time, they are violent and vindictive in temper, reckless, improvident, often intemperate, and almost always without local attachment. They value their "locations" more for the facilities of hunting, and the exemption they afford from all restraint, than for the fertility the soil or their fitness for forming a family home.

As the animals of the adjacent woods recede, and the wave of emigration reaches their boundaries, they are ready, like the aborigines, to dispose of their "improvements," and, without a sigh of regret for what they leave behind them, to seek a new home in the depths of the forest. The outskirts of civilization whereon they dwell, and the newly-settled territories of which they are in advance, present a wide field for the picturesque delineation of men and character, and the Americans have availed themselves of it with more skill, freedom, accuracy, and humour, than any strangers who have attempted it.

The following sketches I found dispersed through a variety of local publications and the productions of the daily press. Of the latter, "The Spirit of the Times," a New York paper, devoted to sporting and humour, and sustained with singular ability, as well as at a vast expense, furnished many of the best articles. Of the former, though well known in the United States, but one or two have ever found their way to England, as they generally contained others of a less interesting or inferior character. I have, however, found the field, even restricted as it is to "the Byeways, Backwoods, and Prairies," more extensive than it at first appeared to be. There are classes and scenes of diversified interest yet untouched, the sketches of which I regret that I have not been able to compress within the prescribed limits of this work.





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THE  
AMERICANS AT HOME.

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I.

THE PRE-EMPTION RIGHT;

OR, DICK KELSY'S RIGHT TO HIS LAND CLAIM.

DICK KELSY was one of the earliest settlers in the Upper Missouri country, and a more open-hearted or careless son of Kentucky never squatted in the "Far West." He had wandered from his parent state more for a change of location than any desire to improve his condition, and if a spot offered easy hunting facilities, it mattered not what contingencies were added, Dick "*sot* himself down *thar*." Tall, raw-boned, good-natured and fearless, he betrayed no ambition to excel, except in his rifle, and the settlers generally conceded that his "shooting-iron" *was* particularly *certain*! A spot upon one of the tributaries of the Missouri won Dick's heart at first sight—it bordered upon a beautiful

stream;—had a far-spreading prairie, skirted by a fine grove of timber, for a landscape, and abounded with all sorts of game, from a prairie fowl to an *Indian*. Here Dick built his cabin, beneath the shadow of his own *cotton* tree; and he used to tell his neighbours that nature had, after practising on the rest of creation, spread her finishing touches on his claim. Its wild beauty deserved his lavish praise.

In this western habitation our hero held undisturbed sway, his only companion being a negro slave, who was at once his master's attendant and friend. Kelsy and the negro had been raised together, and from association; although so opposite their positions, had imbibed a lasting affection for each other,—each would have freely shed blood in the other's defence. The bonds of servitude were, consequently, moulded into links of friendship and affection, securing to them a feeling of confidence in their lonely habitation in the wilderness. Their nearest neighbours were situated at a small trading settlement, some ten miles distant, where Dick always repaired to exchange his furs for ammunition and other essentials. Here he also learned the news from the far-off seat of government; but the busy world beyond

little interested these roving sons of the western forests,—a brush with the *red skins*, or a challenge shooting match, possessed much more interest for them. At length, however, these western pioneers were aroused from their quietude and inactivity by the news that Congress had passed the famous *Pre-emption Law*. As yet none in the region we write of knew its provisions, or, distinctly, what rights it conferred; each squatter, therefore, laid out the bounds of his claim in accordance with his own desire, and stood ready to defend the title against all encroachments. The fever of emigration became an epidemic, and soon that speculating mania, which, in imagination, built fortunes in a day, spread even to the confines of civilization. The axe of the pioneer soon began to startle the wild denizens of the forest, where for ages the hunter alone had disturbed their repose.

One bright morning a *ripple* of the advancing tide, in the persons of two strangers, was discovered by Dick about a quarter of a mile from his cabin, where, apparently, they had rested for the night. The first was a man about middle stature, of a dark swarthy complexion, with an easy eye, prominent teeth, and clad in a dilapidated suit of Ken-

tucky jean; an old chip hat surmounted his figure, and in his right hand he held the sceptre of the pioneer—a *rifle*! His companion was a pale sickly-looking little woman, clad in a coarse linsey-woolsey gown, and in her hand she held a faded calico sun-bonnet; close by stood a small wagon, with a quilt cover, to which was harnessed a horse, bearing evident marks of long travel and hard fare.

"How are you, strangers?" was Dick's first query. "Judgin' from appearances, you're lookin' out a location."

"Yes," replied the man, in a surly tone, "I've been lookin' all along, but I aint found any yet fit fur a *white man*."

"Well, you've jest got to the spot now," says Dick. "Creation aint laid out any place prettier, and arter takin' a view of it, you'll say so. You and the missus better go up to my cabin, and rest till you can take a good look at its best *pints*, and I predicate you'll come to a conclusion."

"Well, guess I'll stay a spell," was the stranger's response; and, following Dick, he was introduced beneath the Kentuckian's hospitable roof, after which Dick started to the settlement for some notions with which to entertain them more comfortably. On his

arrival the whole conversation at the settlement was the *pre-emption act*, and during the debate on its merits, he mentioned the "new arrival" in his neighbourhood of the strangers. They had passed through the settlement, and as all new comers are a subject of interest, various opinions were expressed in regard to these.

"Judgin' from that stranger's frontispiece," said one, "I shouldn't like him fur a near neighbour."

"He's rayther a sour lookin' customer," added another; "and how dreadful poorly his wife looks!"

"I've invited him to locate near me," remarked Kelsy, "and I can't say he's got a very pleasin' look; but the rough shell may have a good kernel, boys."

After providing necessities, Dick gave the strangers an invitation to come up and help the stranger to raise a cabin. All agreed to be *thar* on the next Saturday, and homeward he started. On his arrival, Sam was cooking the evening meal of wild game and corn bread, all the time expatiating to the guests what a good man "Massa Dick" was, and particularly impressing upon their minds that he (Sam) was "Massa Dick's 'strordinary niggah!" Sam's efforts at amusement failed



upon the strangers, for one was quietly weeping, while the other wore a scowl of anger. Dick noticed their looks on entering, and endeavoured to cheer them.

"Don't look down-hearted, strangers," said he, "you aint *among* Ingins ef you are *near* 'em; thar aint a spot in the universal yearth calkilated to make you feel better than whar you are now. Sam and me never felt bad sence we located here—only when the Ingins penned us in the cabin fur three days, while all our *bar meat* was hangin' on the outside."

"It's this cussed woman," answered the stranger, "that makes me feel bad—she's eternally whimperin' about bein' so fur from home—I wish she was in h-ll!"

"Stop that, stranger," said Dick, in a determined tone; "the love I have for an old Kentucky mother won't permit me to see or hear one of her sex abused beneath my cabin roof, ef it is in the wilderness; I don't like red skins, none of 'em, but even a *squaw* couldn't be abused here!"

"Well, I'm done," was the reply. "I'll git a cabin of my own, and then I guess I'll do as I please."

"No you won't," said Dick; "ef you stay in these diggins and abuse her, you're in a hotter place than whar you jest now wished her."

It may be supposed that the host and his guest retired, the first night of their meeting, with no favourable impression of each other; and while Sam and his master were making all right for the night, the former ventured to remark—

“Dar aint much good in *dat* white man, Massa Dick.”

“Not a *heap*, Sam,” was his master’s reply; “but he shan’t pisin us long with his company;” and with this comfortable resolve they turned in for the night.

At daylight Dick started out with his rifle on his arm, to observe the foot-prints around his dwelling, and note whether they were biped or quadruped, the close proximity of the Indian tribes and their frequent thefts making caution and care necessary to preserve, not only property, but life. As he was returning to his cabin, a *scream* startled him from his careless gait; it was a new sound in that wilderness, and many a day had passed since Dick heard anything akin to it. He started forward with a bound, convulsively clutching his rifle, while his blood, urged into rapid action by the movement, was again forced back to his heart, chilled by another fearful scream of a woman in distress. In a moment he emerged from

the strip of woods, within view of his cabin, and there beheld the stranger with his arm raised to strike; fronting him stood Sam, poising a large hunting knife in defence; while upon the other arm of the muscular negro, hung the trembling form of the stranger's sickly wife. A few moments and Dick was beside the combatants, inquiring the cause of their hostile attitude. When Sam informed him that the stranger had twice, with his fist, felled the woman to the earth, his rifle raised instinctively to his shoulder, as if justice demanded instant and dreadful punishment for such a dastard act. Dick slowly remarked, as he directed his arm—

“I’ll sarve you out, you infernal *savage*!”

The stricken wife observing the action, threw herself before the weapon, imploring the enraged host to spare her husband’s life.

“Well, woman is woman,” soliloquised Dick; “for they’ll stick to the devil, ef they ever take a notion to him. If you have the least hankerin’ arter the mean varmint, in course I’ll let him *slide*; but he must clar out of my diggins—I can’t be near whar anythin’ of this breed grows—so arter breakfast we’ll separate.”

When the morning meal was ended, the stranger drew up his wagon, thrust his

companion into it, and sullenly departed, muttering a threatening farewell.

"God help that poor creatur," said Dick, as his late guests disappeared from view, "*she's got a hard row to hoe*; and as for that serpent with her, he'd better keep out of my tracks. I should be mightily tempted to sarch his carcass to see ef he had a heart in it. Sam," continued he, "*you're a nigger*, but thar's more real white man under your black skin than could be found in an acre of such varmint as that *sucker*. Give me your fist, old fellar; while Dick Kelsy's got anythin' in this world, you shall share it!"

While this bond of closer friendship was being formed between master and slave, malice was holding her revel in the heart of their late guest. He had observed Dick's love for the spot where he had squatted, and judging rightly that he had neglected to file his claim to it in the Land Office, he stopped a short distance below him, intending to remain, and if possible to gain possession of it. Kelsy had his dislike for the stranger increased by finding him remain on his section, and he ordered him to leave forthwith. The stranger gave as an excuse, that his wife was so sick that she couldn't travel, and ended with a request that he would let him

erect a hut to shelter her, while he went in search of a permanent location. In pity for *her*, Dick consented, and the stranger proceeded to prepare timber for a small cabin. The following Saturday the neighbours gathered, and by nightfall placed a roof over their heads, kindly supplied them with some necessaries, and left, each more confirmed in his dislike for the stranger. The next morning he started off, as many supposed, never to return; the natural kindness of the settlers was immediately manifested towards his wife, and nothing that would conduce to her comfort was lacking in the cabin of this heart-broken woman.

After the lapse of several days, contrary to all expectation, the stranger returned, and a visible change was manifested in his manner—his surliness assumed a more impudent and offensive character; and on receiving a further intimation that it was time he was *moving*, he insolently told Dick to “clear out,” himself, for that he (the stranger) was the rightful owner of the claim. Dick laughed at him, and told him to be off quietly, that his carcass was safe while that woman clung to him.

Kelsy was laughing next day, down at the settlement, as he related the stranger’s words,

and described his insolent bearing ; but his smile of scorn was turned to a frown of wrath, when the land agent, who happened to hear him, informed the unsuspecting squatter that the stranger had indeed entered the claim his cabin was upon. Dick, on hearing this news, shivered the bottle in his hand to atoms ; and, drawing his breath through his teeth until it fairly whistled, he remarked—

“ That stranger may have *some* of my claim, but his share shall be my *signature to the title.*”

The sun was fast sinking when Dick started home, rather limber from the effects of wrath and liquor. Having resigned himself to the care of his horse, he swung from side to side, in a state of dozing unconsciousness. When he neared his cabin, it had become pitch dark ; to which, if possible, the woods bordering his claim added a gloomier shade. The instant his horse entered beneath the foliage, a sharp pain shot through the side of the rider, so acute as to wake his powers suddenly into full consciousness. The spring he made in the saddle started his horse forward into a rapid gait, and in an instant more a sickly sensation robbed him of all consciousness. When he opened his eyes with returning

animation, his look fell upon his faithful slave, who was bending, with an anxious countenance, over the rude couch of his master.

“Bress God ! Massa Dick, you knows Sam, your ole nigga—I sees you does —dars life in you yet, massa—dar is ; but dis poor nigga had amost gib you up, for sartain !”

An unseen hand had, in the darkness, plunged a knife into Dick’s body, as he entered the wood ; he had clung to his horse’s mane, until the animal stopped at his cabin door, where Sam, waiting for his master, had caught his bleeding and unconscious body in his arms as it fell reeling from the saddle. The faithful negro had stanchd the blood, and applied every restorative his rude knowledge could devise ; but it was long ere the eyes he so loved opened to the recollection of past events and present injury.

“That was a foul dig in the ribs, Sam,” murmured his exhausted master ; “but ef I don’t trail up the sarpint and pull his sting out, it’ll be because I and that ar old rifle of mine has to part company !”

The natural strength of the patient, together with Sam’s careful nursing, soon restored him to his legs, and a few days’ gentle exercise imparted strength enough to his frame to

support the weight of his rifle. A fixed resolve to trace the assassin added a severe cast to Dick's pale features—Sam, as he observed him, quietly shook his head, with the remark,

“Ah, ah! Massa Dick's soon goin' Ingin huntin'—*sure!*”

One morning early, Kelsy ordered Sam to saddle his horse, and proceeded himself to clean his rifle; with more than usual care he adjusted each particular of his accoutrements, and started off to the settlement, taking the road leading by his neighbour's cabin. On his arrival, he gathered a few of his cronies together, who all knew of the dastardly attempt on his life, and imparted to them a scheme he had been maturing, for discovering if the stranger was the “stabber in the dark,”—which few seemed to doubt, but of which he wished to be certain.

As the sun inclined to the west, Kelsy made preparation for return, and, changing his dress for a suit belonging to one of his friends, he stuffed his own with straw, surmounted the figure with his fur cap, and mounted it upon his horse before him, where it was secured to the saddle; four of his friends accompanied him, and, thus prepared, they bent their course towards Dick's cabin. Night set in while they were on their march,



and soon the moon rose, casting her soft light over a prairie landscape, as beautiful as ever the eye of man rested upon. It was a western scene of wild and picturesque loveliness, grand in its vastness of extent, and rich in its yet-hidden resources. Its lonely quietude was calculated to subdue the wild passions which throbbed in the hearts of those who now broke its stillness ; but a glance at the firm features of the party proved that its beauty was unheeded by them as they swept onward to the dread business of their march. When within a mile of Dick's habitation, they halted in a secluded hollow, where they resigned their horses to the care of one of the party, with instructions to turn Kelsy's horse loose about the time he supposed they, by a circuitous route, on foot, had reached the woods, and when he heard a shot, to follow with their other horses. Dick and his companions stole unperceived beneath the shadow of the wood, and cautiously approached the trail leading to his cabin ; ere they had reached the spot, however, one of the party descried the horse leisurely wending his way across a strip of prairie, the figure seated upon his back swaying from side to side, so like his owner when "half sprung," that they could with difficulty suppress a laugh. The

sound of the horse's hoofs brought from concealment another figure, whose form was indistinctly visible, emerging from behind a thick covert; and the excitement of the moment, at thus having securely trapped the offender, had almost discovered them—their game, however, was too intent on his purpose, or he would have heard the slight exclamation which burst from the lips of one of the party. Moving stealthily to a good position he awaited horse and rider, and taking deliberate aim, *fired*. No movement of the figure indicated a *hit*, and the party could hear his exclamation of disappointment. The horse sauntered along undisturbed by the report, perceiving which the assassin hastily reloaded, while Dick and his friends crept up unperceived almost to his side. Raising his rifle again, he steadily poised his aim, and pulled the trigger—erect the figure held its place, and resting his rifle upon the ground, he exclaimed—

“I’ve *hit* him, or he’s the *devil himself*!”

“I guess it’s the old gentleman come for you, stranger,” said Dick, as he snatched the rifle from his hand, and the whole party closed in a circle round him.

The detected squatter looked paralyzed—his tongue refused its office, while his form,

quivering with apprehension, could scarcely keep erect, and his usually cold uneasy eyes seemed fixed balls of light, so dreadful were they in their expression of coward fear. The party proposed to settle his business at once, and this movement loosened his tongue—he broke forth in piteous accents of supplication,

“Oh, God! oh, God!” cried he, “you won’t kill me—will you?”

“Well,” said one of the party, “*we won’t do anything else!*”

Kelsy interposed, and suggested that his death be deferred until daylight, in order that the stranger might see how it was done, and be put to sleep respectably. They immediately adjourned to Dick’s cabin, where they found Sam holding the straw figure in his arms, and looking in a state of stupor at the horse; he thought his master was “done for;” but great was his joy when the well-known sounds of Kelsy’s voice assured him of his safety.

The party seated themselves in a circle in the cabin, with the culprit in the centre, and his shrinking form, trembling with fear, and pallid imploring countenance, looked most pitiful. As Kelsy gazed upon him the form of his sickly wife seemed to twine her arms around his neck, beseeching as when she

before interposed herself between him and death, and the vision of his mind searched out a tender spot in Dick's heart. He resolved to give him a chance of escape, and, therefore, proposed to the party that they should decide by a *game of cards* whether the stranger should die or be permitted to leave the country. Dick's friends protested against such mercy ; but after an earnest appeal from him, in behalf of the woman, they yielded—cards were produced, and one of the party was selected to play against the culprit. By Kelsy's entreaty, also, he was allowed the choice of his own game, and he selected *euchre*. All seated themselves closer around the players—breathing seemed almost suspended—a beam of hope lent a slight glow to the pallid countenance of the stranger, while the compressed lips and frowning brow of his antagonist, gave assurance that no mercy would temper his play for this fearful stake. The rest of the party shared his dislike for the culprit, who was looked upon as a common foe, and their flashing eyes were bent upon his swarthy countenance with an expression of deadly hate, which forced out the cold drops of perspiration upon his sickly brow, and sunk his heart with fear. The cards were cut, and the stranger won the

*deal*—he breathed with hope—he dealt and turned up the *right bower*—his antagonist *passed*, and the stranger raising the *bower*, bid him play. The hand was soon finished and the stranger counted *two*! His visage lighted up, and he wiped his brow with a feeling of confidence in his luck. The next hand the stranger ordered the card up and was *euchered*—they now stood *even*, and he again looked anxious. In the next two hands they successively won each a single count, and it was the stranger's deal again—he turned up a *king*, and held in his hand the *queen* and *ten of trumps*, together with the *eight of diamonds* and the *king* and *ten of clubs*. His antagonist ordered the *king* up, and as the stranger discarded his *diamond*, a gleam of certain success overspread his visage—the rigid face of his antagonist betrayed no sign of exultation, but his brow, on the contrary, became closer knit into a scowl, which, by his party, was looked upon as a presage of defeat. Dick's friend led the *jack of clubs*—the stranger followed suit with his *ten of clubs*—then came the *ace of trumps*—the stranger paused a moment, and played his *ten spot*—out came the *right bower*, and he yielded his *queen*—the *left* fell before his eyes, and his last *trump*, the *king*, was swept away! At each play his

countenance grew more and more ashy in its expression of despair and dread ; his lips had lost their colour, and his eyes had gained an intenseness of expression that seemed as if they could look into the very soul of the frowning figure before him, and read there his impending doom. For the first time a slight smile played upon the features of Dick's friend as slowly he spread before him the *ace of clubs* ! The stranger crushed his *king* within his trembling hands and threw it from him, as he sank into a state of stupor, the very counterpart of death.

"Your game's up, stranger," coolly remarked the winner ; "yes, it's *up*—played very *neat*—but it's up ! And you've jest won a *small* patch of Kelsy's claim—about six foot by two, or thereabouts."

The sun had begun to tip the tops of the forest trees when this exciting contest was ended, and all the party adjourned to the outside, with the doomed stranger in their midst. They moved with silence, for a deed of blood was to be enacted. The law of the wilderness was about to offer up a victim for common safety—the midnight assassin to expiate his guilt upon the spot, and by the hand of him whom he had there endeavoured to consign to death. The music of the morning

songsters met no harmonious accord in the hearts of those who now strode amid their melodies—the sweet morning air kissed brows fevered with passion, and the light breeze that played amid the forest grove and skipped innocently across the far-spread prairie, was about to bear upon its pinions the shriek of agony. Having arrived at a suitable spot, they bound the culprit to a sapling, and he hung in his bonds already, apparently, bereft of life.

“Stick him up at a hundred yards, boys,” said Dick; “ef he is a *snake*, give him a ‘small show’ for life, and ef I miss him at the first fire we’ll let him *slip*.”

The culprit aroused on hearing this, and pleaded for the smallest chance in the world.

“Don’t shoot me like a *mad dog*!” he exclaimed, in most piteous accents.

“You’re worse, you hound,” said his late antagonist; “and if Dick don’t wind up your business for you, *I* will.”

“Come, boys,” continued Dick, “you all know that this old iron’s *certain*, so give the varmint this chance—it’ll please him, and he’ll die off all the easier!”

After some persuasion, Dick’s request was acceded to, and the parties took their positions. Life hung, for the culprit, by but a

thread, and that thread the will of Kelsy. Slowly the latter raised his rifle, while the party, breathless, intently fixed their eyes upon the victim. Dick's hand began to tremble, and his aim became unsteady, for the sickly form of the stranger's wife again seemed to rise and plead for mercy—he rested his rifle on the ground, without the heart to fire ; but, in an instant the vision fled, and his eye fell clear upon the countenance of the stranger ; a morning ray lighting up his features, exhibited a gleam of mingled triumph, hatred, hope, and revenge—there was no mistaking its dark expression of contending passions. The pity that had almost unnerved Kelsy and saved his foe vanished, and raising his rifle sudden as thought, the weapon rung out the stranger's knell. As the ball from its muzzle sped through his brain, a wild shriek arose upon the air, and all was again still—they loosened his bonds, and he fell forward, *dead !*

His remains were consigned to the earth without a tear, even from his companion, to whom the tragedy had been imparted. His cruelties had long since obliterated from *her* heart the last spark of early fondness ; all she requested, when the grave had closed over him, was to be sent to her friends in Ohio,



which was kindly done by the settlers—Dick bestowing upon her his whole stock of fine furs to defray her expenses.

Kelsy set himself down in undisturbed possession of his claim, and Sam, his faithful slave, often points to the small green mound at the edge of the grove, with the remark—

“Dat’s Massa Dick’s signature to dis land claim—*dat is !*”

## HOSS ALLEN'S APOLOGY;

OR,

THE CANDIDATE'S NIGHT IN THE MUSQUITO SWAMP.

"WELL, old fellow, you're a *hoss*!" is a western expression, which has grown into a truism as regards Judge Allen, and a finer specimen of a western judge, to use his constituents' language, "aint no whar," for besides being a sound jurist, he is a great wag, and the best practical joker within the circuit of six states. Among the wolf-scalp hunters of the western border of Missouri, Judge, or, as they more familiarly style him, *Hoss* Allen is all *powerful* popular, and the "bar" hunters of the southern section equally admire his free and easy manners—they consider him one of the people—none of your stuck-up imported chaps from the dandy states, but a real genuine westerner—in short, a *hoss*! Some of the Judge's ad-

mirers prevailed upon him recently to stand a canvass for the gubernatorial chair, in which he had Judge Edwards for an antagonist, and many are the rich jokes told of their political encounters. A marked difference characterizes the two men, and more striking opposites in disposition and demeanour would be hard to find, Edwards being slow, dignified, and methodical, while *Hoss* tosses dignity to the winds, and comes right down to a free and easy familiarity with the "boys." *Hoss* Allen counted strong on the border counties, while his antagonist built his hopes on the centre.

Allen and Edwards had travelled together for a number of days, explaining their separate views upon state government, at each regular place of appointment, and were now nearing the southern part of the state, a section where *Hoss* had filled the judgeship with great unction. Here he resolved to spring a joke upon his antagonist, which would set the south laughing at him, and most effectually insure his defeat among the *bar* hunters. He had been maturing a plan, as they journeyed together, and now having stopped for the night, about one day's journey from the town of Benton, one of their places of appointment, and the head quarters

of the most influential men of the *bar* section, Hoss proceeded to put his trick in progress of execution. He held a secret conference, at the stable, with the boy who took his horse, and offered him a dollar to take a message that night to Tom Walters, at the forks leading to Benton. The boy agreed, and Hoss pencilled a note describing his antagonist, who was unknown in the south of the state, coupled with an earnest request, that he would keep a look-out for Judge Eddards, and by all means be careful not to let him get into that cussed *cedar swamp* !” His express was faithful, and in due time Tom received the missive. In the meantime, the victim, Edwards, in a sweet state of confidence, was unbending his dignity at hearing Hoss relate to their host his amusing yarns about the early settlers. Having talked all the household into a merry mood, he proposed turning in for the night, but first offered his service to unlace the girls’ corsets, and in an underbreath asked the old woman to *elope* with him in the morning—Edwards blushed at this, the girls tittered, and the host and his wife said, he was a “*raal hoss* !” Allen acknowledged he was a leetle inclined that way, and as he had had his *feed*, he now wanted his *straw*.

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In the morning Hoss Allen became "dreadful poorly," and it was with great difficulty he could be prevailed upon to get up. All were sympathising with his affliction, and the matron of the house boiled him some hot "sass-tea," which, the old man said, relieved him mightily. Judge Edwards assured Hoss, that it would be necessary for him to lay up for a day or two, and the afflicted candidate signified the same himself. Before they parted Hoss requested Edwards, as he had the whole field to himself, not to be too *hard* upon him. His antagonist promised to spare him, but chuckled all the while at having a clear field in Allen's most popular district. Shaking the old *Hoss* by the hand, as they were about to separate, he remarked—"We will meet at Benton, I hope, in a different trim, Friend Allen." They *did* meet in different *trim*, but Edwards little dreamt the particular kind of trim *he* would appear in. As soon as Judge Edwards was fairly started, it was surprising the rapid change which took place in his antagonist—Hoss's eye lit up, a broad grin spread over his features, and pulling off the handkerchief, which was tied around his head, he twirled it above him like a flag, then stuffed it in his pocket, remarking

coolly, at the same time,—“Well, that thar swamp, jest at this season, is *awful!*” His express reported himself after his night ride, assured Allen that all was O. K., and received his dollar for delivering the message; upon receiving which intelligence, Allen seated himself quietly and comfortably at his coffee, and imbibed it with a relish that drove the idea of sickness into a hopeless decline.

Judge Edwards rapidly progressed on his way, highly gratified at having his opponent off in this part of the field, and as he, in this happy mood, journeyed onwards he set his brain to work conning a most powerful speech, one that would knock the sand from under Hoss, and leave him in a state of sprawling defeat. He resolved to sweep the south, from that point, like a prairie fire. About noon, or perhaps an hour after, he arrived at Tom Walters' for dinner, and while it was preparing, inquired how far he was from Benton.

“I've an idea,” said Tom, “you're well on to nine miles frum thar—jest an easy arternoon ride.”

This was highly satisfactory to the Judge, and perceiving that the provender preparing was of a like pleasing character, he spread himself back upon a hickory-bottomed chair

with a kind of easy dignity, at once comfortable to himself, and edifying to his host.

"Stranger," inquired Tom, "did you *scare* up anythin' like the two candidates, Jedge Eddards and old Hoss Allen, on your way down *yeur*?"

"I did see something of them, my friend," answered the Judge, and then, as if making up his mind to surprise Tom, and give him a striking example of democratic condescension, he inquired, "Would you know either of the gentlemen, if they stood before you?"

"Why, as to old Hoss," said Tom, "I don't know anybody else, but this new Jedge I aint never seed, and ef he is the slicked-up finedied sort on a character they pictur' him, I don't *want* to see him; its my opinion, these squirtish kind a fellars ain't perticular hard baked, and they allers goes in fur *aristocracy* notions."

The Judge had no idea that Tom was smoking him, and he congratulated himself that an opportunity here presented itself, where he could remove a wrong impression personally; so, loftily viewing this southern constituent, he remarked—

"You have heard a calumny, my friend, for *Judge* Edwards now sits before you, and

you can see whether his appearance denotes such a person as you describe."

"No!" shouted Tom, with mock surprise, "you aint comin' a hoax over a fellar?—you raally are the sure enough Jedge?"

"I am really the Judge, my friend," responded his honour, highly elevated with Tom's astonishment.

"Then gin us your paw," shouted Tom, "you're jest the lookin' fellar kin sweep these your diggins like a catamount! What in the yearth did you do with old Hoss on the road? I heerd he was a comin' along with you. He aint gin out, has he?"

The Judge replied, with a smile which expressed disparagement of Hoss Allen's powers of endurance, that he was forced to lie up on the route, from fatigue. Dinner being announced as ready, the Judge and Tom seated themselves, and the latter highly expanded his guest's prospects in the district, assuring him that he could lick Hoss "powerful easy, ef he wasn't broken-winded." The meal being ended, the Judge demanded his horse, and inquired of his host the direct road to Benton, which Tom thus mapped out:—

"Arter you pass the big walnut, about two miles from your, keep *it* a mile on your



left, and take the right trail fur about six hundred yards, when you'll cum to the 'saplin acre,' thar you keep to the right agin, and when that trail fatches you up, why right *over from thar* lies Benton."

This was a very clear direction to one who had never before travelled the road, but the Judge, trusting to luck, said, "he thought he would be able to get there without much difficulty," and started off, leaving his late entertainer gazing after him.

"Well, I allow you *will*, Jedge," chuckled Tom,—“You'll git inter that *swamp*, jest as sure as shootin', and you'll hev the biggest and hungryest audience of mosquitors ever a candidate preached law or larnin' to!” To secure his finding the swamp road, he had stationed his boy *Jim* near the turn off, to make the matter sure.

In the course of a couple of hours along came Hoss Allen, who, as soon as Tom took hold of his bridle, winked his eye at him while he inquired—

“Did Jedge Eddards come along, Tom?”

“Well, he *did*, Hoss, oncommon extensive in his political feelins’.”

“And you didn't let the Jedge stray away from the swamp road?” inquired Hoss.

“Well, I predicate I didn't, fur by this

time he's travellin' into the diggins most amazin' innocently," and then the pair enjoyed a regular guffaw !

"He's safe as a skin'd *bar*, then, Tom, and I'll spread his hide afore the Benton boys to-morrow—jest let them into the joke, and I allow, after that, his dandified aristocracy speeches won't have much effect in this section."

"Go it, Jedge," shouted Tom, "ef I aint thar to hear it, it'll be 'cause the breath'll leave me afore then—gin him goss without sweeten'—rumple his har, but don't spile the varmint !"

After Hoss had stayed his stomach with a cold bite, he bade Tom good-day, and started for Benton, highly tickled with the success of his trick. As he neared the "saplin acre," he met *Jim*, who exhibited a full spread of his ivories, when Hoss inquired which road he had directed the gentleman before him.

"He gone into de swamp road, massa, but what de debil he want dar, 'cept he arter coon skins, dis niggah doesn't hab no idear whatsomdeber."

Allen passed on, assured that all was right, and as his horse leisurely ambled forward, he broke into singing a verse of a western ditty, which says—

"Thar aint throughout the western nation,  
Another like old Hickory,  
He was born jest fur his siteation—  
A bold leader of the free."

As night spread her curtain over this wild district, Hoss neared Benton, and as his nag jogged up the principal street, he broke out into a louder strain, repeating the above verse, on hearing which, the "boys," who were expecting him and Edwards, turned out, and old Hoss was received with a cheer.

"Hello, Jedge! How are you, Old Hoss? Give us your paw, Governor! Here at last, Squire!" and sundry such expressions of familiar welcome were showered on Allen by the crowd. "Come in, and git a drink, old fellar, shouted one of the crowd," and forthwith all hands pushed for the hotel bar room, where sweetened corn juice was pushed about with vast liberality—at the *candidate's* expense of course.

"Whar did you leave the new fellar, Eddards?" was the general inquiry.

"Why, boys, I stopped to rest on the road, and he slid off to git ahead of me—I heered on him at the forks, and expected he was here. It's my opinion, boys, he's seen a *bar* on the road, and bein' too delicate to make the varmint clar the path, he's taken a long circuit round him!"

This raised a laugh among the crowd, and it was followed up by the general inquiries as to what Edwards looked like, but to these Hoss shook his head, remarking, as he raised his hands expressive of how they would be astonished—"Jest wait tell you see him yourselves, boys, and then you'll be satisfied."

Let us return to Judge Edwards, who had easily found his way past the "sapling acre," and by the aid of Jim's direction progressed into the swamp road, as easy as if it were his destination. Having travelled, as he thought, about ten miles, he began to look out for Benton, and every now and then uttered an expression of surprise, that they had located the town in such a swampy country; every rod he progressed became more and more obscure, the brush more thick and wild in growth, and the ground more moist and yielding. Night, too, that season for the rendezvous of underbrush and tangle-wood horrors, was fast gathering its forces in the depths of the forest, and beneath the shadows of the thick bushes, shrouding, as with a dark mist, each object on the earth's surface, creeping up the trunks of the old trees, and noiselessly stealing away the light in which they had proudly spread their green

foliage, while in lieu of their showy garb he clad them in a temporary mourning. The song of the birds became hushed, while the cry of the startled *wolf* was borne upon the breeze to the ear of the affrighted traveller, interrupted occasionally by the sharp *m-e-o-w!* of the wild-cat, making together a vocal concert most unharmonious to the ear of the bewildered candidate. To sum up these horrors a myriad of *mosquitoes*, as musical as hunger and vigorous constitutions could make them, hummed and fi-z-z-zed around him, darting in their stings and darting away from his annoyed blows, with a pertinacity and perseverance only known to the Missouri tribe of insects.

Poor Edwards!—he was fairly in for it—into a swamp at that! Night was fast making all roads alike obscure, and with amazing rapidity covering our traveller in a mantle of uncertainty. The possibility of his escape that night first became improbable, and then impossible. He hallooed at the highest pitch of his voice, but the wolf was the only live varmint that answered his cry, and a strange fear began to creep over his heart. He remembered well reading accounts of where hungry droves of these animals had eaten the horse from under the

saddle, the rider upon it, bones, hide, *har* and all, leaving scarce a vestige of the victims to mark the deed, and his hair grew uneasy on his cranium at the bare thought of such an unpolitical termination to his canvass. At this particular moment a *yell*, as of a thousand devils in his immediate neighbourhood, set his heart knocking against his ribs in a fearful manner. When he partially recovered from the shock, he tied his horse to one tree and quickly mounted another—whispering the hope to his heart, at the same time, that a meal on his horse would satisfy the gathering crowd of varmints, who were shouting their death song below him. Having seated himself astride a limb, the mosquitoes had a fair chance at him, and they put the Judge through as active an exercise as ever was inflicted on a recruit; there was this difference, however, between him and a recruit, that *they* are generally *raw* at the commencement of a drill, but poor Edwards was most *raw* at the end of his lesson. Every new yell of the swamp pre-emptioners, made him climb a limb higher, and each progression upwards appeared to introduce him to a fresh and hungrier company of mosquitoes; the trees in the swamp were like the dwellings in Paris, their *highest*

tenants were the most needy. Day at length broke, and our harassed candidate, almost exhausted, clambered from his exalted position. His frightened but unscathed steed uttered a neigh of welcome as he bestrode him, and giving loose to the rein he committed his escape to the animal's sagacity, while he aided his efforts by a devout supplication. Accident favoured the horse's footsteps, for striking the trail leading to the road he started off into a trot, and soon broke his rider's spell of terror, by turning into the main avenue leading to Benton. Edwards slowly passed his pimpled hand over his worse pimpled face, sadly remarking—

“Last night's '*bills*' all passed, for I bear their stinging *signatures* all over my countenance.”

When ten o'clock came, on the day following Judge Allen's arrival at Benton, the town swarmed with the southern constituency of Missouri, and as soon as the tavern bell, which had been put in requisition to announce the candidate's readiness, had ceased its clamour, Hoss mounted the balcony of the hotel, and rolling up his sleeves “spread himself” for an unusually brilliant effort.

“Boys!” shouted he, “I want your

attention to matters of vital import—of uncommon moment, and replete with a nation's welfare." [Here looking down into the crowd at Sam Wilson, who was talking as loud as he could bellow, about an imported heifer he had just bought, Hoss called his attention:] "Sam," said he, "you'd better bring that heifer of your'n up here to address the meetin', and I'll wait till the animal gits through!" This raised a laugh on Sam, and Hoss proceeded. After dilating at some length on the *imported* candidate who was his antagonist, he "*let himself out*," on some of the measures he advocated, and particularly dwelt on the fact that he went in for creating a license law for hunting varmints!

"Would you have the least mite of an idea, boys," said Hoss, "that this creatur' of a faction wants to have every man's rifle stamped with the state arms, and then made pay a license to the state before he can git a bonus for wolf scalps?" [At this moment a shrill voice interrupted him again; a girl belonging to the hotel was shouting to a couple of youngsters, who had been despatched to the barn for eggs, to "quit suckin' them thar eggs, or the candidates would stand a mighty small chance for thur



dinner.] "Jest tell that gall," said Hoss, "to suck my share and stop her screamin'." He again continued—"I want to know what in yearth this Massissippi country's comin' to, when sich fellars finds favour with the people—what do you think of him, boys?"

"Why, *cuss his pictur*!" was the general response from the *bar* hunters.

While Hoss was thus arousing public indignation against his antagonist, a stranger entered the crowd, and after listening a moment to the speaker's imaginary flights, he interrupted him by shouting—

"I deny your assertions, Judge Allen!"

This was a bomb shell, and the crowd cleared a space round the stranger, in expectation of a fight; but Allen, after surveying the stranger, in whom he recognised his antagonist Edwards, coolly inquired why *he* disputed it?

"What, *me*!" shouted Edwards, "who can better declare your assertions false than the man you are misrepresenting? you know very well that *I* am that Judge Edwards!"

Hoss Allen turned calmly round to the crowd and said, "Boys, you know I never git angry at a man insane or in liquor, and as I don't know this fellar, and never seed him afore in my life, it's the best proof

that he aint Jedge Eddards; so you'll oblige me by taking him off the ground, and keeping from disturbing the meeting."

Expostulation was useless; without any ceremony he was carried into the hotel, boiling with indignation. There, however, he had to stay, at a convenient distance, to hear that Allen was giving him "*particular jesse*"

After the meeting adjourned three cheers were given for Hoss Allen, and all parties gathered into the bar to take a little *fluid*, and discuss the speech. Edwards having now been relieved from durance, started for Hoss; burning inside with choler, and smarting exteriorly from mosquito-bites, he looked *bitter*.

"Do you say you don't know me, Judge Allen?" inquired he.

Hoss looked steadily at him, then, coolly taking out his spectacles, he wiped the glasses, adjusted them upon his nose, and surveyed the questioner from head to foot; he then remarked:

"Thar is somethin' about your voice, and the clothes you ware, that I ought to know; Jedge Eddards wore a coat and kerseys exactly like your'n, but I'll swar he had a better-lookin' face than you carry when we parted

yesterday mornin'. If you are him, you're been the wust-used candidate I've seed in an age."

"Yes," responded Edwards, "thanks to that d—n nigger that sent me into the swamp. I tell you, sir, that I have passed a night to which the infernal regions are a scant pattern, and between mosquitoes, wolves, and wild cats, I should not be surprised if my hair had turned grey."

"I begin to *re-cognize* you now, Jedge," said Hoss, in a sympathetic tone, "and no wonder I didn't know you at first sight—your head is swelled as big as a *pumkin*! I'll do the clean thing, Jedge," said Hoss, starting for the balcony; "I'll apologise afore the boys, publicly, for not knowin' you."

"No, no!" shouted Edwards, who knew his apology would only place his night's adventure in a more ridiculous light. "I don't demand any apology." But he was too late, Hoss had already called the attention of the crowd.

"Boys," said he, "as an honourable man who finds himself in the wrong, I am bound to apologise, publicly, to my friend Jedge Eddards. The Jedge is a leetle changed in appearance since we wur last together, and I did not *re-cognize* him; I

tharfore ask his pardon fur orderin' him off the ground."

"I grant it!" shouted Edwards, glad here to wind up the apology; then, turning round, he added, "Come, boys, let us drink good friends."

"Wait a minit, boys," said Hoss; "the Jedge and I havin' smoothed that little marter over, I jest want to tell you why I didn't know him at fust sight. You all know that the mosquitoes in cedar swamp are an *oreful* hungry breed, and when they git a passenger they present him with numerous 'relief bills.' Well, I had gained considerable popularity in that swamp, by presentin' their condition before the legislatur', and askin' for relief for the distressed inhabitants; the Jedge, to head me down thar, passed all last night on a limb of one of the trees makin' stump speeches to the varmints; and you can see by his countenance that, expectin' to be elected, he had accepted all their *mosquito bills*!"

One tremendous shout rent the air, followed by bursts of laughter, from which Edwards retreated into the hotel. We have but to add that Hoss carried the *Bar* counties "as easy as rolling off a log!" His antagonist in vain tried to stem the tide of

him : when he essayed to speak a *m-e-o-w* or a wild cat, or the *hum* of a mosquito, imitated by some of his audience, would be sure to see the rest *swaggering*, and spoil his effort.

## III.

## WOLF-HUNTING ON THE TURKISAG.

At an early hour we got everything ready for our journey to the Turkisag. Our party consisted of about fifty, well stored with provisions and ammunition, a precaution not unnecessary, as it sometimes happened that hunters were unable to leave their station for days; and it was now that season of the year when wolves were the most ravenous, and mustered in great numbers.

Those who have never taken part in these *skirls*, as they are commonly called, which generally take place by moonlight, cannot have a correct idea of the horrors attendant upon them, To see myriads of wolves before you, howling, and darting their fiery eyes upon you, as if they would break through the barrier that prevents them from devouring you, is indeed a terrific scene, and

one calculated to arouse in the breast of the hunter all the coolness and courage he may possess.

It was broad moonlight when we arrived at the place selected as the scene of operations. The Turkisag possesses a different aspect from the Blue Ridge. The latter is of a noble and magnificent description, but the scenery of the former is of a different order: there was an air of desolation hovering about it that produced feelings of awe, and you gazed around you as if in expectation of beholding something instinct with horror. Dark and gloomy caves or holes met your sight on every side; but where a level spot presented itself, it was thickly covered with trees, short, and of monstrous bulk, so that they nearly shut out the light of the moon in various places.

The spot where we purposed to erect our scaffolding was in the dreariest place we could select, and, as it proved, where wolves were the most numerous. First, we all set to work with our axes, and cleared a space of about fifty feet in extent, by cutting down the smaller trees, leaving, of course, the larger ones standing. At the extreme west of this clear space, two scaffolds were erected after this wise: branches of trees were driven

into the earth, six or eight inches apart, rising above the ground about eight feet; then a great quantity of brushwood was wove around them from the bottom to the top, presenting a strong basket or net-work; across the top were laid large branches, affording a tolerably firm flooring; and around the works props were placed, giving sufficient strength to the whole capable of bearing the weight of the party; a rude ladder was also made to enable us to ascend, but more particularly for the runner, whose share of the dangers of wolf-shooting was not inconsiderable. These scaffolds were built nearly on the edge of a precipice of about sixty feet in height; on the north-east, and about one hundred feet from us, arose a peak, stretching far above our heads, overhanging a gap in the mountain about twelve feet wide. The opposite point was somewhat lower than that on which we stood, making a considerable descent, leading round to the place where we were encamped. Before us appeared an interminable forest, with here and there a cave, the uncertain moonlight only adding to its repulsive appearance.

Pine knots were fastened to some of the larger trees, and lighted, so as to enable us to see distinctly anything that approached.



We were then ordered to take our stations. Bob and myself were placed on the same platform, of which he very readily took upon himself the command.

Now comes the runner's office. I had never before been on an excursion of a similar nature, and had but an imperfect idea of his duties. Girden and Ralph, the two most active of our party, proceeded to start on their dangerous errand. Girden was already prepared; but Ralph took off his hunting-coat and leggings, and everything that could in any way impede his running. Then, taking from his pouch a drug, a piece of which they placed in their moccasins, and holding the remainder between their fingers, they both struck out in our front, cautiously threading their way, their eyes glancing in every direction, intending to separate when about one hundred yards distant, Ralph taking a south-easterly direction, while Girden went to the north-east.

The utmost anxiety was now manifested by the party; our rifles were all ready, at the slightest appearance of a wolf, to do their work. For about a quarter of an hour all was silent; and the lurid glare of the pine torches conveyed anything but a joyous feeling to my breast, lighting up objects only

in their immediate vicinity, shrouding all beyond in darkness.

Presently a faint howl was heard, that caused the blood to rush to my heart. Nothing but actual experience can enable any one to form a correct estimate of the intense anxiety that a person labours under on such occasions. Again, another howl, more loud, then another—another, from every direction of the wood; then simultaneously, a burst, as if from myriads, resounded through the wild, echoing from mount to mount, followed up by cries still more awful and terrific.

“Be ready!” said an old hunter beside me, in a tone that betrayed the excitement he felt, “for we shall have work to do presently;” and at that instant a wolf emerged from the wood into the open space, the torches revealing him plainly to our view. A dozen rifle balls in an instant pierced him. Another followed, glancing first at the torches, and then at us, as if uncertain what course to take.

“Be chary of your ammunition,” said the same hunter, “for we may need all we’ve got;” and he raised his rifle, as the wolf was turning back, and instantly brought him to the ground.

Now our fears were wrought up to the

highest pitch for the safety of Girden and Ralph. We could not discover the least sign of their proximity, and the awful howls now came thick upon our startled senses, borne upon the breeze that whistled past us. Suddenly we heard footsteps, and could detect the quick breathings of a person, followed close by the rush of multitudes of those ravenous beasts, and presently the form of Ralph was seen, darting like a winged bird towards the goal. Close upon his track are seen the wolves—they press upon him, their eyes gloating at the prospect of his becoming their victim—he looks not behind—he gains the open space—already they clutch at his legs—he eludes their fangs, and with a spring reaches the ladder—the next moment he falls breathless upon the scaffold—he is **SAFE** !

Crack ! crack ! went the rifles ; wolf after wolf fell ; another and another supplied its place, till countless numbers lay stretched around. The gleam of the torches threw a fitful light on their protruding tongues and glaring eyeballs, as they ran to and fro, rendered frantic by the unnatural appearance of the flames, and the exciting nature of the drug used by the runners, so that they fell easy victims to our murderous fire, which, however, in no way appeared to check their onward rush.

But where was Girden? Ralph cast a hasty glance at the party—but one look—he saw that the poor runner was not of their number, and he sprang to his feet, as if he would not remain in security, and suffer the unfortunate youth to die alone. But before he could put his project in execution, the footsteps of the runner were heard, and the next instant the form of Girden was seen, speeding his way towards us, his long hair streaming in the wind, pursued by numbers of his savage foes. I sought to warn him by my voice, but my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. There seemed to be no hope for him: behind, before, and on the south side, came the enraged monsters, while on the opposite side appeared the gap before named, in which direction was his only chance, though a frail one, of escape.

“Turn, Girden, to the gap!” cried Ralph in a hoarse voice; and the runner for an instant paused, as he now became aware that his retreat was cut off. There was no time for thought; swift as an arrow he turned short round, ascending with the speed of the wind the rising ground on the opposite side of the gap. Soon he must reach the summit, and then fall a prey to his foes. My senses almost forsook me as I watched his figure as

it moved along. The incessant fire of our rifles for a time prolonged his life, but our hearts sickened as we observed our failing ammunition. Suddenly a wolf sprang, and fastened himself upon the runner's shoulders: the rest were some distance behind. Quick as light the runner turned and shook him off, ere his teeth had mangled his body, and his knife passed through and through his neck; but no time was there for him to withdraw the knife, for numbers had now reached the spot. Again another closed upon his heels, but the tough staff did not fail the uncowed man, and the wolf fell, crushed by the Herculean blow. I now could scarcely see Girden, so excited was I, as he neared the gap, a terrific chasm, twelve feet wide. Could he reach the opposite<sup>e</sup> bank? Impossible; besides the desired point offered an additional difficulty to his gaining it by being somewhat higher than that on which he stood. He neared the brink—he hesitated—no time was to be lost—already a dozen of the ferocious monsters were about to seize him—one end of his staff was placed on the ground, and with a desperate spring he launched himself across the chasm—his feet gained the spot—his hands catching the limb of a sapling on the summit secured his safety—but no!—the

unstable landing, from the shock, slowly gave way under his feet, and he hung by his hands. He struggled, but could not regain his footing. With a snap the twig gave way and he sunk down the gap, the earth rushing after him with a noise like that of an earthquake, leaving us uncertain of the fate of the runner.

## IV.

## DEAF SMITH, THE TEXAN SPY.

ABOUT two years after the Mexican revolution, a difficulty occurred between the new government and a portion of the people, which threatened the most serious consequences—even the bloodshed and horrors of civil war. Briefly, the cause was this: The Constitution had fixed the city of Austin as the permanent capital, where the public archives were kept, with the reservation, however, of a power in the president to order their temporary removal in case of danger from the inroads of a foreign enemy, or the force of a sudden insurrection.

Conceiving that the exceptional emergency had arrived, as the Camanches frequently committed ravages within sight of the capital itself, Houston, who then resided at Washington, on the Brazos, dispatched an order

commanding his subordinate functionaries to send the State records to the latter place, which he declared to be, *pro tempore*, the seat of government.

It is impossible to describe the stormy excitement which followed the promulgation of this *fat* in Austin. The keepers of hotels, boarding-houses, groceries, and farobanks, were thunderstruck, maddened to frenzy; for the measure would be a death-blow to their prosperity in business; and, accordingly, they determined at once to take the necessary steps to avert the danger, by opposing the execution of Houston's mandate. They called a mass-meeting of the citizens and farmers of the circumjacent country, who were all more or less interested in the question; and, after many fiery speeches against the asserted tyranny of the administration, it was unanimously resolved to prevent the removal of the archives by open and armed resistance. To that end they organized four hundred men, one moiety of whom, relieving the other at regular periods of duty, should keep constant guard around the state-house until the peril passed by. The commander of this force was one Colonel Morton, who had achieved considerable renown in the war for independence, and had still more re-



cently displayed desperate bravery in two desperate duels, in both which he had cut his antagonists nearly to pieces with the Bowie-knife. Indeed, from the notoriety of his character, for revenge, as well as courage, it was thought that President Houston would renounce his purpose touching the archives, so soon as he should learn who was the leader of the opposition.

Morton, on his part, whose vanity fully equalled his personal prowess, encouraged and justified the prevailing opinion by his boastful threats. He swore that if the president did succeed in removing the records by the march of an overpowering force, he would then himself hunt him down like a wolf, and shoot him with little ceremony, or stab him in his bed, or waylay him in his walks of recreation. He even wrote to the hero of San Jacinto to that effect. The latter replied in a note of laconic bravery :

“If the people of Austin do not send the archives, I shall certainly come and take them ; and if Colonel Morton can kill me, he is welcome to my ear-cap !”

On the reception of this answer the guard was doubled around the state-house. Chosen sentinels were stationed along the road leading to the capitol, the military paraded the

streets from morning till night, and a select caucus held permanent session in the city-hall. In short, everything betokened a coming tempest.

One day, while matters were in this precarious condition, the caucus at the city-hall was surprised by the sudden appearance of a stranger, whose mode of entering was as extraordinary as his looks and dress. He did not knock at the closed door—he did not seek admission there at all; but climbing unseen a small bushy-topped oak, which grew beside the wall, he leaped without sound or warning through a lofty window. He was clothed altogether in buckskin, carried a long and heavy rifle in his hand, wore at the bottom of his left suspender a large Bowie-knife, and had in his leathern belt a couple of pistols half the length of his gun. He was tall, straight as an arrow, active as a panther in his motions, with dark complexion, and luxuriant jetty hair, with a severe, iron-like countenance, that seemed never to have known a smile, and the eyes of intense vivid black, wild and rolling, and piercing as the point of a dagger. His strange advent inspired a thrill of involuntary fear, and many present unconsciously grasped the handles of their side-arms.

"Who are you, that thus presumes to intrude amongst gentlemen without invitation?" demanded Colonel Morton ferociously, essaying to cow down the stranger with his eye.

The latter returned his stare with compound interest, and laid his long, bony finger on his lip, as a sign—but of what the spectators could not imagine.

"Who are you? Speak! or I will cut an answer out of your heart!" shouted Morton, almost distracted with rage by the cool, sneering gaze of the other, who now removed his finger from his lip, and laid it on the hilt of his monstrous knife.

The fiery colonel then drew his dagger, and was in the act of advancing upon the stranger, when several caught and held him back, remonstrating.

"Let him alone, Morton, for God's sake. Do you not perceive he is crazy?"

At the moment Judge Webb, a man of shrewd intellect and courteous manners, stepped forward, and addressed the intruder in a most respectful manner:

"My good friend, I presume you have made a mistake in the house. This is a private meeting, where none but members are admitted."

The stranger did not appear to comprehend

the words, but could not fail to understand the mild and deprecatory manner. His rigid features relaxed, and moving to a table in the centre of the hall, where there were materials and implements for writing, he seized a pen and traced one line: "I am deaf!" He then held it up before the spectators, as a sort of natural apology for his own want of politeness.

Judge Webb took this paper, and wrote a question: "Dear sir—will you be so obliging as to inform us what is your business with the present meeting?"

The other responded by delivering a letter inscribed on the back, "To the citizens of Austin." They broke the seal and read it aloud. It was from Houston, and showed the usual terse brevity of his style:

"Fellow Citizens:—Though in error, and deceived by the arts of traitors, I will give you three more days to decide whether you will surrender the public archives. At the end of that time you will please let me know your decision.

SAM. HOUSTON."

After the reading, the deaf man waited a few seconds, as if for a reply, and then turned and was about to leave the hall, when Colonel Morton interposed, and sternly beckoned him

back to the table. The stranger obeyed, and Morton wrote: "You were brave enough to insult me by your threatening looks ten minutes ago; are you brave enough now to give me satisfaction?"

The stranger penned in reply, "I am at your service!"

Morton wrote again, "Who will be your second?"

The stranger rejoined: "I am too generous to seek an advantage, and too brave to fear any on the part of others; therefore I never need the aid of a second."

Morton penned, "Name your terms."

The stranger traced, without a moment's hesitation: "Time, sunset this evening; place, the left bank of the Colorado, opposite Austin; weapons, rifles; and distance, a hundred yards. Do not fail to be in time!"

He then took three steps across the room, and disappeared through the window, as he had entered.

"What!" exclaimed Judge Webb, "is it possible, Colonel Morton, that you intend to fight that man? He is a mute, if not a positive maniac. Such a meeting, I fear, will sadly tarnish your laurels."

"You are mistaken," replied Morton, with a smile; "that mute is a hero, whose fame

stands in the record of a dozen battles, and at least half as many bloody duels. Besides, he is the favourite emissary and bosom friend of Houston. If I have the good fortune to kill him, I think it will tempt the president to retract his vow against venturing any more on the field of honour."

"You know the man, then. Who is he? Who is he?" asked twenty voices together.

"Deaf Smith," answered Morton, coolly.

"Why, no; that cannot be. Deaf Smith was slain at San Jacinto," remarked Judge Webb.

"There, again, your honour is mistaken," said Morton. "The story of Deaf Smith's death was a mere fiction, got up by Houston to save the life of his favourite from the sworn vengeance of certain Texans, on whose conduct he had acted as a spy. I fathomed the artifice twelve months since."

"If what you say be true, you are a mad-man yourself!" exclaimed Webb. "Deaf Smith was never known to miss his mark. He has often brought down ravens in their most rapid flight, and killed Camanches and Mexicans at a distance of two hundred and fifty yards!"

"Say no more," answered Colonel Morton, in tones of deep determination; "the thing is

already settled. I have agreed to meet him. There can be no disgrace in falling before such a shot, and, if I succeed, my triumph will confer the greater glory!"

Such was the general habit of thought and feeling prevalent throughout Texas at that period.

Towards evening a vast crowd assembled at the place appointed to witness the hostile meeting; and so great was the popular recklessness as to affairs of the sort, that numerous and considerable sums were wagered on the result. At length the red orb of the summer touched the curved rim of the western horizon, covering it all with crimson and gold, and filling the air with a flood of burning glory; and then the two mortal antagonists, armed with long ponderous rifles, took their station back to back, and at a preconcerted signal—the waving of a white handkerchief—walked slowly and steadily off in opposite directions, counting their steps until each had measured fifty. They both completed the given number about the same instant, and then they wheeled, each to aim and fire when he chose. As the distance was great, both paused for some seconds—long enough for the beholders to flash their eyes from one to the other, and mark the striking

contrast betwixt them. The face of Colonel Morton was calm and smiling, but the smile it bore had a most murderous meaning. On the contrary, the countenance of Deaf Smith was stern and passionless as ever. A side view of his features might have been mistaken for a profile done in cast-iron. The one, too, was dressed in the richest cloth, the other in smoke-tinted leather. But that made no difference in Texas then, for the heirs of heroic courage were considered peers, the class of inferiors embraced none but cowards.

Presently two rifles exploded with simultaneous roars. Colonel Morton gave a prodigious bound upwards, and dropped to the earth a corpse. Deaf Smith stood erect, and immediately began to reload his rifle; and then, having finished his brief task, he hastened away into the adjacent forest.

Three days afterwards, General Houston, accompanied by Deaf Smith and ten more men, appeared in Austin, and without further opposition removed the state papers.

The history of the hero of the foregoing anecdote, was one of the most extraordinary ever known in the West. He made his advent in Texas at an early period, and continued to reside there until his death, which



happened some two years ago ; but although he had many warm personal friends, no one could ever learn either the land of his birth, or a single gleam of his previous biography. When questioned on the subject, he laid his finger on his lip ; and if pressed more urgently, his brow writhed, and his dark eye seemed to shoot sparks of livid fire ! He could write with astonishing correctness and facility, considering his situation ; and although denied the exquisite pleasure and priceless advantages of the sense of hearing, nature had given him ample compensation, by an eye quick and far-seeing as an eagle's, and a smell keen and incredible as that of a raven. He could discover objects moving miles away in the far-off prairie, when others could perceive nothing but earth and sky ; and the rangers used to declare that he could catch the scent of a Mexican or Indian at as great a distance as a buzzard could distinguish the odour of a dead carcass.

These were the qualities which fitted him so well for a spy, in which capacity he rendered invaluable services to Houston's army during the war of independence. He always went alone, and generally obtained the information desired. His habits in private life were equally singular. He could never be per-

suaded to sleep under the roof of a house, or even to use a tent cloth. Wrapped in his blanket, he loved to lie out in the open air, under the blue canopy of pure ether, and count the stars, or gaze with a yearning look at the melancholy moon. When not employed as a spy or guide, he subsisted by hunting, being often absent on solitary excursions for weeks and even months together in the wilderness. He was a genuine son of nature, a grown-up child of the woods and prairie, which he worshipped with a sort of pagan adoration. Excluded by his infirmities from a cordial fellowship with his kind, he made the inanimate things of the earth his friends, and entered by the heart's own adoption into brotherhood with the luminaries of heaven! Wherever there was land or water, barren mountains or tangled brakes of wild waving cane, there was Deaf Smith's home, and there he was happy; but in the streets of great cities, in all the great thoroughfares of men, wherever there was flattery or fawning, base cunning or craven fear, there Deaf Smith was an alien and an exile.

Strange soul! he hath departed on the long journey, away among those high bright stars which were his night lamps; and he hath either solved or ceased to ponder the

deep mystery of the magic word "life." He is dead—therefore let his errors rest in oblivion, and his virtues be remembered with hope.

## V.

## MAPLE SUGAR.

PERHAPS my reader may require enlightening as to how and why men should fight and hate each other for years, and spend a great deal of money, in order to establish property in a bush.

A sugar-bush, to some ears doubtless, brings no idea more important than that of the Christmas tree on whose stiff branches are hung the treasures of Santa Claus; great coils of candy and horns of sugar-plums and kisses; not to mention oranges, raisins, figs, and many a pretty-ticketed gift besides. That would do for a city meaning of the term. But where little boys and girls are obliged to make tamarack-gum serve instead of sugar-candy, a sugar-bush means from two hundred to a thousand maple-trees, grouped here and there within the circuit of a mile

or so ; their luxuriant crowns making a cool twilight under the hottest summer sun, and their straight and polished shafts giving, in the glittering winter moonlight, no faint idea of those remaining columns of the fanes of old, so fraught with associations of grace and elegance to the mind of the classic traveller. *We* say little about their beauty, although it is probable that even here, that is not without a degree of its own benign influence ; but happy he whose far-reaching “ eighties ” enclose a sugar-bush !

A thousand miles from the ocean, even brown Havanas cost money ; and I believe it may be asserted that all the world like sugar. A late traveller tells us that his wild kervash—a being to whom one might have supposed a Cossack girdle of raw pork would have been the more acceptable dainty—would bury his fingers in a plate of sugar, and devour it by the handful ; and we have ourselves known a grave philosopher from whom his lady declared she should be obliged to lock up her sugar-barrel. In these western shades, to which sugars from abroad come burdened with many a profit, the taste is quite as conspicuous ; and the primitive resources of wild honey and maple sugar are much sought after. Honey, though very valuable, is not

so universally adapted to the taste, and therefore takes only the second place. The sap of the soft-maple is used for a variety of household purposes besides making sugar, so that what is called the sugar season—somewhere about the month of March—is looked upon as a time of domestic hilarity; and if the season prove favourable, no pains are spared to secure all its advantages. This implies no small effort, for no one makes a business of sugar-making, important as it is. It is an affair of expedients and special provision, year after year; managed just in that disadvantageous jack-of-all-trades sort of way with many other operations in a thinly-peopled region, where every body engages in every thing.

The Indians used almost to monopolize the trade in maple sugar. The mococks, or bark panniers, in which they brought the sugar to market, were pretty objects at least, and the sugar itself brought them something towards their wretched living. The manufacture just suited them; a week's labour to a month's rest is quite enough for an Indian. But rumours got afloat that the red men boiled their food—musk-rats for instance—in the kettle of sap, during the sugar-making process; and some said too that they used their

blankets for strainers—all which contributed to bring the sugar into bad odour—(an unavoidable pun, reader!)—so there was one means of whisky-buying the less for the poor wretches, before they left us.

Their first successor in the woods, the pioneer, without sympathy for them personally, seems yet to have imbibed, perhaps from the forest air, somewhat of their love of roving, their desire of freedom from restraint, their dislike of continuous labour, and their preference for such as promises a speedy return, however small. Going into the sugar-bush has something of the excitement which the forester loves so well to mingle, whenever and wherever he can, with all his work. A dash of uncertainty—a chance of failure—relieves the tedium of mere labour. An enterprise, in the success of which *luck* is to have its share, is always undertaken with more zest, as the hunter would lose half the pleasure of the chase if he were sure of bagging the game.

But what can *luck* have to do with sugar-making? The trees cannot run away—the axe will cut—the gouge will pierce—the troughs will hold—fire will burn—sap will boil. True; but the sun is fitful, and will not always shine just enough and not too

much, nor the frost come always at night and stay away by day. It may be too warm to freeze, or too cold to thaw. It is this regular alternation that brings delight to the sugar-boiler ; for it is only in the freezing process that the sap is accumulated, and in the thawing that it is given out. Nor is this all for which we look to *luck*. The sap is sometimes not so nectarious as it should be, and so yields less than its forty-eighth of the delicious sweet which the man of kettles claims as his due ; and for an inferior yield luck gets always the blame.

But when he “lots” of a good season, he reaps a rich reward for his labour. The breaking up of winter, when the frozen earth and frozen trees begin to feel the sun’s genial influence, is the propitious period. Winters of abundant snow are more particularly favourable, as more frequent changes of temperature usually attend its departure. In this case, the sugar-maker sets forth with lively hopes, and works indefatigably in preparing his troughs, in which labour his only aid is his faithful axe, with which he will scoop out two dozen a day. This done, he selects the fairest trees—hacks them after a peculiar fashion (opinions conflict on this important point), and then places a bark con-



*selle* has made her fingers sticky with *la tire*.

This family of maple is very numerous. Nearly forty species are known, of which ten belong to the United States. The climate of New England is peculiarly favourable to their growth, as is shown by the perfection to which several of the most valuable species attain. The red maple is most remarkable for the varying colour of its leaves, which greatly beautify forest scenery. The leaves begin to turn, in the latter part of summer and during the earlier part of autumn, from green to a deep crimson or scarlet. The forests of no other country present so beautiful a variety of colouring as our own; even corresponding climates with the same families bear no comparison. The difference is said to depend on the greater transparency of our atmosphere, and consequently greater intensity of the light; for the same cause which renders a much larger number of stars visible by night, and which clothes our flowering plants with more numerous flowers, and those of deeper, richer tints, gives somewhat of tropical splendour to our really colder parallels of latitude.

Of this extended family, the rock maple in all respects is the most remarkable. While young, it is justly admired for its

ornamental beauties as a shrub. When in a state of maturity, for the purposes of art, no native wood possesses more beauty or a greater variety of appearance.

In the forest it often attains great height, and produces a large quantity of timber. A tree in Blandford, which was four feet through at base and one hundred and eight feet high, yielded seven cords and a half of wood. It is said that the wood of this tree may be easily distinguished from the red or the river maple, by pouring a few drops of sulphate of iron upon it. This wood turns greenish; that of the two former turns to a deep blue.

In Massachusetts, between five and six hundred thousand pounds of sugar are annually made, valued at about eight cents a pound, yielding a revenue of about forty-four to fifty thousand dollars per annum. Of the sap, the average quantity of a tree is from twelve to twenty-four gallons each season. In some instances it is much greater. Dr. Rush cites an instance of twenty pounds and one ounce of sugar having been made within nine days, in 1789, from a single tree in Montgomery county, New York. In another instance, thirty-three pounds are said to have been produced from one tree in one season.

ductor, or something better if he can get it, so that no drop of the precious liquid may escape the rough-cut troughs arranged below. A huge "lug-pole," supported on crotches, receives the kettles; which in size and number are the best which can be found, and these are usually each slung by the aid of an ox-chain. With such primitive contrivances many thousands of pounds of maple sugar are made every year. No expensive apparatus, no attempt at refining—if we except a great tub of lime-water in which to rinse every trough and bucket frequently during the whole process of collecting the sap—and this is cared for only by the careful—a small minority.

But I am before my story a little. Sugar-making is undertaken, as before hinted, by every body indiscriminately, who can command a "bush," and this includes many whose disposable means could not compass the purchase of *one* great caldron, much less of half a dozen. This occasions a racing and chasing after kettles; scouring the country in all directions to borrow or hire those indispensable articles. I have known them sought at a distance of twenty miles, with a promise of the payment of one half the value of the kettles in sugar. With a favourite

object ahead we are apt to promise largely, and with the best intentions too; and what an object is it to get plenty of sugar for wife and children without paying the grocer; nay, with something to exchange with him for tea for the good woman! If the season be favourable, and the sap run well, and the bush be not too far off, the aid of the wife is not unfrequently called in, to tend fires and do the lighter part of the work. I have seen the pony saddled, and wife and baby mounted on it, and led into the woods, looking like the picture of Joseph and Mary going down into Egypt. What a primitive pastoral air runs through all the arrangements of this backwoods life! It startles one sometimes to see things that bring back the oldest scenes on record.

The process called "sugaring-off"—rather an abstruse affair—is, I believe, not considered likely to be quite perfect without the aid of female hands, and the making of a sort of candy, pulled from hand to hand scientifically, is to be done by the young folks, of course. This is a frolic, or the excuse for one; and the candy is beautiful and most delicious. It is a part which I confess a weakness for myself; and it is not without sufficient precedent; for many a gay *démoi-*

spare any forest trees in clearing a farm by fire; but groves in which they abound might be spared from the unrelenting axe of the woodman. Maple-trees may also be cultivated, and will become productive in twenty or thirty years; and it would certainly be one of our most beautiful pledges of regard for posterity to plant groups of maples in convenient situations upon our lands, and to line the road-sides with them. I am sure that such a plan, if carried into effect, would please public *taste* in more ways than one, and we might be in part disfranchised from dependence on the cane plantations of the West Indies.

“At six stations in Maine there were produced 36,650 lbs. This, at twelve and a half cents a pound, would be worth 4581 dollars.

“It must be also remarked, that the manufacture is carried on at a season of the year when there is little else to be done; and if properly-shaped evaporating vessels were used, a much larger quantity of sugar could be manufactured.”

## VI.

## A YANKEE IN A PLANTER'S HOUSE.

I PAUSED a moment at the gate for a view at the old family mansion. The northern front is not nearly so attractive as the southern. The trees which had been recently planted at my last visit, were now finely grown; and it was evident that another month would make the spacious lawn one of the most beautiful spots in the world. The house was large, painted white, and furnished with dark-green shutters. Huge chimneys were built at both ends outside the house; and, on the northern side, a broad piazza, supported by half a score of columns, extended along the whole length. An hospitable deal bench ran along the weather-boarding; and at one end of the piazza was a sort of shelf attached to the balustrade, on which a neat unpainted bucket, with shining hoops and bail of brass,

was always standing. In a hole of this same shelf, fitted for the purpose, was the ewer ; and near this, on a roller, was a towel white as the snow. Through the centre of the building ran a hall, some ten or twelve feet in width. I may be permitted to say here, for the benefit of my northern reader, who may not have seen the south, that, for three-fourths of the year, the hall and the porch of a southern mansion are in constant requisition. You sit, lounge, or take your siesta, in either. Both, but more commonly the piazza, serve you for your promenade. In the hall you very frequently see the appliances for sporting—guns, belts, pouches, horns—while on the walls you will perhaps see engravings of celebrated horses. In the piazza, the dogs consider themselves privileged ; and even the hounds sometimes intrude. The youngsters romp there, and there the hobby-horse performs his untiring gallop.

“I swear,” said Sancho Panza, and he might have said the same *without* swearing, “I think the world is everywhere the same.” But the sanguine squire, it will be remembered, was untravelled. There is no record that he ever left the chimney-corner before his marriage ; and Donna Teresa Panza first awoke and missed his conjugal presence on

the first night of his world-renowned pilgrimage. With many grains of allowance, therefore, O shade of the squire of squires ! do I repeat thy immortal words ; much, I confess, in thine own spirit, but nevertheless "so as with a difference." Else why have the terms "haughty Southron" and "weasel Scot" been bandied across the Tweed ? Why else have "La Belle France" and "Le Diable Angleterre" played fisticuffs across the Strait of Dover ? Why else the epithet "proud" for the Spaniard, and "passionate" for the Italian ? Why else swells the world of words, as the sands of the sea for multitude, with these latter-day additions of Blue-Nose, Yankee, Sucker, Hoosier, Buckeye, Wolverine—what not ?

"Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,  
But Harry Harry ;"

said the new-made king Henry V.

"No, Sancho," thought I, as I came down the next morning, "the world is *not* everywhere the same ; and you yourself would not have said so on a second knight-errant pilgrimage. And, as if to confirm my remark, the voice of Professor Matters, in no very gentle tones, saluted my ear.

"Git a-o-u-t ! Don't ye s'pose I kin put



on my own clothes? Same thing, a'most, yew tried to dew last night. Jest as if a man couldn't pull off his own trowsis! Who told ye to come here?"

"Maussa John."

"Who's maussy John?"

"De colonel, maussa."

"What in the name o' human natur du ye call me maussy for? I ain't nobody's master."

"Yes, maussa."

"There it is ag'in. Yew kin leave these diggins."

"Yes, maussa."

"Wal, why don't ye go? Clear out. I guess I kin dress myself. What's yer name?"

"Name Grief, maussa."

"Name *what*?"

"Name Grief."

"Git aout! yew're jokin'! What's yer name, anyhow?"

"Name GRIEF, maussa."

"Wal, yew kin take my hat." \*

Here there was a short pause.

"No, no! yew consumed fool! I don't want it *brushed*. Yew're gittin' all the nap off on't. Yew kin *go*. I'm *threw* with ye this time. I al'ays wait on myself to hum; and I don't want nobody to wait on me *away*

\*Synonymous with another Yankee phrase—"Well! that beats me."

from hum. I'm a free and independent citizen of Steventown, State of Maine."

"I al'ays waits on de gemmen, maussa."

"Childern of Isril ! can't you take a hint, yew darned nigger ! Make yourself scarce now, or I'll make you think the eend o' the world's comin'. Ef I don't I hope I may die !"

Here Grief evidently became alarmed ; for I heard his step at the head of the stairs. As he passed me, a moment afterwards, his mouth displayed its whole inventory of interior decoration, as he said—

"Ki ! ben gwine 'stracted, sure's you bawn !"

## VII.

## LIGHT-WOOD.

OF all the sounds that ever broke upon the cold, wet, hungry traveller's ear during years of peregrinations through the "sunny south," when it rains semi-occasionally three days every week, and is awful wet the remainder, there is one that is worse, worser, worstest of all the others.

"Fancy my feelings," on alighting at "the City Hotel," for instance, such a paragon of excellence as that at Albany, Geo., after riding upon the "Alligator stage line" all night, anxious to meet a bright blazing fire, and knowing from experience how soon it would be created by light-wood; to hear Cæsar, in reply to the landlord's order to fly round and get a fire, in despairing tones say: "Massa! de light-wood am done gone, sah."

Gone too, then, is all chance for fire or

food. For whoever heard of a nigger that could build a fire without light-wood? It would be more foolish to think of such a thing, than for a virgin to trim her lamp without oil.

I have been upon the rock-bound leeward shore, and have heard the breakers roll in thrilling tones of death—I've lashed myself to drifting wrecks, and all night long the death-cry heard—I've lain beside the hunter's fire, and till morning dawned the panther's yell rang in my ears, above the lake's wild surge of storm-lashed Michigan—I've closed my eyes in Gotham's halls, in hopes to woo a morning nap in Gotham city, when not a sound of organ-grinder filled the air with mis-named music; but just when Morpheus burst the charm, and all the earth to me was hushed and still, there, there beneath the window rose a female voice, in alto key,

“I'm bound for Sacramento,  
With my wash-bowl on my knee;”

my great regret being that she was not already in that washing town of her ambition; and failing that, that she might be washed into the most convenient horse-pond that would accommodate herself and wash-bowl, together with her dirty monkey, man and music.

But, still among all these horrid sounds, there is none so deathly chilling as "De light-wood am done gone, sah."

There is no place like home, has been several times sung in this world. The chap that wrote that had never been at Sambo's home when "de light-wood am done gone," or he would alter a line or two of that ditty to suit the times—the light of the times.

Who that has ever partaken of a sumptuous supper in the Georgia pine woods, with a thousand-dollar ebony candlestick six feet high at each corner of the table, shedding light from four light-wood candles upon the feast, that will not let his light shine upon the luxury of light-wood? Who that has ever luxuriated around the camp fire of such a hunt as you have read of by "Cour de Chasse," that is not ready to swear that light-wood is one of the actual necessities of life?

Talk to a Georgia *cracker* about the fertile soil of the west, or the rich gold mines of California, and the fortunes awaiting him there, and he interrupts you with an unanswerable question as an argumentative clincher why he does not emigrate, — "Stranger, is light-wood tolerable handy?" which being answered in the negative, decides the case of his emigration for ever.

It is an historical fact that the greatest objection the Seminole Indians had against leaving Florida, was that in the Arkansas country they would find no light-wood.

You may whip, or starve, or chain a nigger- or even kick his shins; but, oh! deprive him not of his light-wood, or you kill him outright.

"Long live the 'possums" might be said,  
 The 'coon unhunted show his head,  
 The deer forsake the hidden brake,  
 Where fear by torch-light makes him shake,  
 And 'Rock,' no longer doomed to feel,  
 With dread, the torch or spearman's steel;  
 In camp hunts then no more be sung,  
 The jocund song so oft has rung,  
 Where Cour de Chasse lent his aid,  
 Or Pitman gave the deer his blade—  
 While round the fire the sav'ry roast  
 Gave half the charm and toast,  
 While through the forest, ranging wide,  
 The light-wood fires like light'nings glide:  
 But who would hunt in woods alone,  
 If light-wood fires were "all done gone?"

Why, no one that has ever enjoyed the comforts, ay, the luxuries of the article.

"And what is light-wood?" I hear whispered by some untravelled reader, who knoweth not it is a name given to the old dry wood of the long-leaf pine, which abounds in the lower part of all the southern

states, and is so full of pitch that a splinter of it will burn like a candle—rather a smoky one it is true. A more appropriate name would be *torch-wood*, as it is the best article for that purpose that ever grew.

It is equally valuable, and is considered, in regions where it abounds, as indispensable for kindling wood; to set a negro to build a fire when the light-wood “am done gone,” is an act of oppression almost equal to those old-time taskmasters that ordered the bricks made without straw.

You have, perhaps, seen the reason given by the “Cracker” why he located upon a certain spot, but it will bear repetition, and is an apt illustration of the love of light-wood.

A traveller came one day upon a most desolate-looking location in the sandy pine woods of Georgia, the prominent features of which were, a small field of excessively small corn, over which a thousand trunks of deadened pine trees stood sentry—a very black log cabin, with about half a chimney, doorless, floorless, windowless—the very picture of discomfort. Thrusting their long noses through a surrounding rail fence, stood half a dozen miserable long-nosed, land-pike breed of pigs, looking anxiously upon an

equal number of half-starved, half-hound curs, that were looking enviously at an equal number of white-headed, white-faced children, who were disputing over a half supply of half-roasted sweet potatoes; while "Lord of all I survey" sat the owner upon the fence, looking the very picture of happy contentment.

Journeying in the pursuit of knowledge, the traveller thought here was a favourable opportunity to obtain that at least which would enable him to discover what could induce a human being to locate himself in such a region of desolation.

He therefore accosted him politely with—"Stranger, I'll thank you for a gourd of water."

"Got none—spring's dry. Hogs been in the brook."

"Why, I don't know how you live without water."

"All in use. Roast taters better'n bil'd one—have one, stranger?"

"No, I thank you. You have poor land here. Your corn is very small."

"Yes. Not worth planting."

"Is it good for potatoes?"

"No! nor nothing else."

"Poor for hogs, too, I should think?"



"Yes, till pine mast falls."

"Is your range good for stock?"

"Not worth a curse."

"How's game?—that's good, I reckon."

"No 'taint. Them infernal camp hunters with their long-legged dogs, and horns, and shot guns, have drove all the deer out of these parts."

"Well, then, I hope you have plenty of fish in this stream I crossed just back?"

"What, in that stinking black swamp? No, sir, none but mud fish and alligators, and a man must be sort o' short of provisions 'fore he eats such meat."

"Well, now, my friend, I see your land is miserably poor; you can raise nothing; you have no water to drink, and I don't see any sign of cows to give you milk; you have no range for cattle or hogs; you have neither game nor fish; and this stinking swamp, as you call it, must make the location unhealthy; now, will you tell me what in the world there is about to induce you to locate here, or to remain in such a place?"

The gentleman's dignity was offended to think any one should be so stupid as to ask such a question. He lifted his long legs from the fence, looked over his field, so as to take in the whole view of dead pines; and waving

his majestic right hand in the same direction, so as to attract the traveller's attention, replied, in the most unanswerable manner—  
“Sir ! don't you see that light-wood is tolerably handy? ”

## VIII.

## THE PRAIRIE DOGS.

THE most amusing and interesting sights of all we saw on the route, were the towns of the prairie-dog, which are to be found at different intervals along the whole course of the sandy Platte, and through several of which we passed. The first one we came to so astonished and interested us, that Huntly, Teddy, and myself, dismounted to take a closer view, while the trappers, being of course familiar with such things, steadily pursued their way.

The prairie-dog is above the size of a large grey squirrel, somewhat longer than a Guinea pig, of a brownish or sandy hue, with a heap somewhat resembling a bull-dog. Being of a social disposition, they collect together in large bodies, and build their towns on a gravelly plain, some of them being miles in

extent, and with a population equalling the largest cities of America, or even Europe. Their earthen houses, which are from two to three feet in height, are made in the form of a cone. They are entered by a hole in the top or apex, which descends vertically some three feet or more, and then takes an oblique course and connects with others in every direction. Their streets are laid out with something approaching regularity, and they evidently have a sort of police, and laws to govern them, not unlike those of superior and more enlightened beings. In some of the towns, a house larger than ordinary occupies a central position, which is tenanted by a sleek, fat dog, supposed to be the presiding functionary of the place, whose sole employment appears to be in sunning himself outside his domicile, and noting with patriarchal gravity the doings of his inferiors.

The town which myself and companions halted to examine, was one of the larger class, and covered an area, to the best of my judgment, of at least five hundred acres. On our approach, a certain portion of the little fellows ran to the mouth of their holes, and squatting down commenced a shrill barking, not unlike that made by a toy-dog—whereupon the pups and smaller-sized animals

betook themselves with the utmost despatch to their burrows. A nearer approach drove the more daring under cover, whence they took the liberty of peeping out to examine us and occasionally of uttering a shrill bark, as a gentle hint that our company was anything but agreeable.

The food of these interesting little fellows consists, for the most part, of prairie grass and roots. They live a life of constant alarm—being watched and pounced upon continually by the wolf, the hawk, the eagle, &c. They are very hospitable to such animals as choose to come and live peaceably among them—and the screech owl and rattlesnake are their constant guests; and it is not unusual, I was told, to find all three burrowed together in one hole. They are sometimes eaten by the Indian and mountaineer. Spending an hour or more in examining the town, we remounted our horses and soon overtook the trappers, Teddy observing as we quitted the village:—

“Faith, your honours, but thim is queer bir-r-ds now, isn’t they? Och! be me mother’s hair! it’s like they’ve bin down to St. Louey and got the notion in their heads, and think they can baat the city, the spalpeens! I’d like ’em to go an sae Dublin,

now—maybe that 'ud astonish 'em a wee bit, and give 'em some new idees respicting public idifices, jist. Ochone ! Ireland's the place to taach 'em—the baastly serpints of bir-r-ds that they is."

## IX.

## TOM WADE AND THE GRIZZLY BEAR.

It was upon a cold November night that about a dozen of us were seated or lying in a half-faced camp, with a blazing fire in front, that dispensed a very cheerful warmth in our midst, but which occasionally sent a very cheerless gust of smoke with it. The day's hunt was over. We had recounted our exploits until each one was as familiar with all the details as if he had been personally present, and the plan of operations for the morrow had been canvassed and decided on, until each man knew his direction and his post. The office of cook for the ensuing day had fallen on me, and I was busy mixing the flour, slicing the middling, cutting up the fat ribs of venison, and running them through with hazel switches, so as to secure both the early departure of our hunters,

and myself an uninterrupted nap in the morning.

Our horses were tied hard by, except one or two old fellows, whose established habits gave assurance that we would find them close at hand in the morning, or whose sagacity taught them that the safest and most comfortable place for them was in the neighbourhood of their masters, to whom they were very willing to render service for protection, *Mais revenons*, &c.

All was comfortable for the night. Our saddles furnished a glorious pillow, and our buffalo skins a glorious bed. With one's feet to the fire, and on such a couch, I defy any one, after a hard day's hunt, to rise in the morning without a sense of energy that would face a lion, and without an appetite that would devour him when faced, and handled *à la* Samson. You may talk about your reunions, your soirées, and your dejeuners, and all that sort of conventionalism that the world calls social refinement; but let me tell you, that, for true-hearted benevolence, for that freedom of expression that conveys and leaves no sting, for an unreserved intercourse, as void of selfishness as it is of parade, commend me to a hunting-party in a half-faced camp. Politics are



never introduced, religious differences find no entrance there, trade is excluded, and in this rare community, where every man is the equal of his neighbour, the jest goes round as harmless as it is general, and when the conversation takes a graver cast, many a story is told of deeds of daring, and of hair-breadth escapes, that startle the listener into deep attention, for the story is generally a story of truth.

It is one of these that I now propose to tell you.

After all my arrangements for the night had been completed, I turned around to lie down, when my eye rested on the stout form of Tom Wade, who was busily patching up, with a needle a shade smaller than a sail-maker's, the rents his garments had suffered in the day's hunt. His broad shoulders, deep chest, and sinewy arm, gave unerring indication of great strength. Like all very powerful men, Wade was proverbially good-natured. I never knew of his having a fight; I have heard of his having had two, but you can never get him to talk about them. Rumour speaks of a threatened grand jury that followed his last combat, and of Tom's mysterious disappearance until the storm blew over. Yet rumour never dared

to hint that anything in that fight was foul. It was the fearful result of a tremendous blow, in a *fair fight*, that frightened Tom into temporary retirement. The consciousness of his immense strength, and the recollection of that scrape, have kept him from that time the most peaceful man in the community.

His courage no one doubted. He was generally selected as the most fitting agent to execute civil or criminal processes that were attended with danger. On such occasions, when he always obeyed with reluctance, and when no one else could be found to do the duty, he was always successful. It must have been the general opinion of his great strength and courage that induced submission to the law whenever Tom Wade had the process to serve. He told me that he had never met with resistance but once, and that was from a gambler named Hinkson, and that after that "fuss" Hinkson was the best friend he ever had.

On some rainy day, when I have nothing else to do, I may tell you of that scrape between Bill Hinkson and Tom Wade. I felt no disposition to sleep, so turning to Wade, I said to him—

"Tom, as soon as you have done sewing

up those great gaps, I wish you would tell me of some of your old hunts. To judge from your success to-day, you must have killed a good deal of game in your time. I am very anxious to hear you talk of hunting, for you know it was only yesterday I had the buck-ague, and last night they had to sit up with me, so that I am very keen to hear something of your earlier deeds with the gun."

"I have not much to tell you, Phil, except that I have shot a good deal when this country was fresher than it is now, and have killed various varments in that time."

"Ah, that reminds me," I replied, "that I heard Billings speak the other day of your having had a hand-to-hand encounter with a grizzly bear on the prairies once. Was that so?"

"Yes," he answered, "I did have a fight with a grizzly bear once."

"Well," I anxiously said, "do tell me all about it. I see you are not sleepy, and I don't feel like going to bed, so let's have it."

"You may well say," he gravely replied, "that I am not sleepy. I never think of those times and go to sleep very shortly afterwards. I try to forget them, but when ever I have little to do, some of the scenes

of that hunt are sure to come into my mind, and recollection almost gives me the horrors. I don't like to think about it. Excuse me—we'll talk of something else."

"Just as you like, Tom, but I would take it as a great favour if you would tell me of that fight."

"Well," he rejoined, "it will perhaps do no harm. When I get to thinking about those days, I can think of little else for some time, and talking about the matter is no worse than thinking about it; so, if you will listen, I'll tell you about that hunt on the plains.

"It is now about fifteen years since a party of us, ten in number, started from the Boon's-lick, to take a buffalo-hunt on the Santa Fè route. We took along with us some pack mules, and two or three good horses, to ride the buffalo down. We did not think it necessary to carry *many* provisions with us, as the game would supply our wants in this respect, and it would fatigue our mules unnecessarily. When we got to the line, we heard from some of the traders that the buffalo were very scarce that year on the trace, and we concluded to turn to the right, and take up the Missouri a little higher. We crossed finally about

Council Bluffs, and travelled along the edge of the Platte.

“From some cause, we found the game very scarce, and the farther we advanced, the scarcer it got. Since we had left the settlements we had only killed enough to supply our own immediate wants, and had not jerked a single pound. As the season was pleasant we concluded to go ahead until we reached the buffalo country, wherever that might be, and every night saw us more remote from the settlements, and apparently as remote from the game. It was, however, very rarely that we all came to camp at night without bringing in something. But I shall never forget the first night when we all assembled around our fire without provisions, and listened to the tale each man told, of his not only having killed no game, but of his not even seeing any. We began to think we had got into a bad box, and that we had better think of returning.

“When this proposal was made, it was ridiculed, and it was answered, that, as we had come this far, it would never do to think of backing out now. What would the folks say at home, when we told them that we got scared at the first night we slept without a supper? and, in addition to this, it was pro-

bable we should find game to-morrow ; that the buffalo must be somewhere on the plains, and that we should enjoy the past with appetites sharpened by a little fast.

"These arguments prevailed, and on the next morning we took up our line of march westward.

"I carried with me to the plains a noble hound, named Brutus. He was, Phil, the most sagacious and most devoted dog I ever knew. He was attached to me by every tie that ever links the human to the brute—courage, exclusive devotion, sagacity, sleepless vigilance, were his. I loved that hound better than I ever loved a dog before or since. He was my constant companion ; at daybreak he was ready, during the hunt he was at my side, or in pursuit of game that I had wounded, and at night he slept at my head, to guard me from danger. He was a noble dog.

"The hunt of the next day with my companions was as unsuccessful as that of the previous one ; they had seen no game. As for me, I had shot a prairie dog, and thinking that that was better than nothing at all, I had brought it into camp. I shall not soon forget the look of intense interest with which my prize was regarded. It is, you know, an

animal no larger than a fox-squirrel. In a moment it was seized, skinned, embowelled, and divided with fairness into ten parts. The hide and bowels were Brutus's share. I never saw famished wolves devour flesh with such fierce greediness as did my companions the pittance allotted to them. My own share I added to the hide and bowels, and gave to the hound. That dog, Phil, must have known the condition of the camp, for, though he was as hungry as I was, yet, I saw him cast one look at the knot of men, and then one look at me; a moment afterwards he turned away from his food, and lay down at his usual place in camp. I turned to pat my dog for his noble conduct, and, when I looked back, the hound's share had disappeared.

"A return was now spoken of more openly, but an accident the previous day had rendered that quite a difficult operation. In our eagerness to hunt, we had omitted the usual precaution to secure our animals, and they had strayed off. The party despatched to find them reported that they had seen nothing of them, and it was concluded that we had better remain together, and advance, than run the risk of separation and starving if we attempted to regain them. It was better to hunt than to look after the horses. If, per-

chance, any of us should see them during the day, he could drive them up, or come to the camp for assistance. Fortunately for us at the time, one horse had remained. He was too old or too poor to run away.

"That night, after the prairie dog had been disposed of, a snort was heard in the rear of the camp; the horse was seen to raise itself suddenly on its hinder legs, and the next instant he was lying on his side, with the life-blood spirting from a hole in his forehead. In less than an hour, my famished companions had gorged themselves into a deep slumber. Brutus and I came in for our share. It was a glorious repast. It seemed to me then the most luscious food I had ever tasted. The first morsel I swallowed half raw, and entirely unchewed. I could not resist the overpowering sense of drowsiness that stole upon me, and leaving to Brutus the task of keeping watch, I resigned myself to that deep sleep that always follows excess.

"There was not much need for the hound's wakefulness. *He* might have slumbered on too, for aught that we knew, or cared. If Indians were near us, they were welcome, for we could have taken from them the means of their subsistence; but nothing disturbed us that night.



“The horse lasted us nearly a week, and at last gave out. We were still advancing, and still there was no game. On the day when the horse-flesh was entirely consumed, the party returned with the usual tidings that no game was seen, not even a prairie-dog, or a snake. I saw Joe Winn, a large, fat man, cast a longing look at Brutus, and instinctively the dog crept to my side and lay down.

“On the next night, it was proposed by Winn that Brutus should be killed. I seized my gun, and swore that the first man that laid his hand on the hound should die. Not a man in the camp stirred, for they knew how I loved that dog. All this time, Phil—would you believe it?—the dog kept his eye steadily fixed on mine, as if to read his fate in the expression of my glance. When he saw me seize my gun, he seemed to know my determination, and wagged his tail and went to nestle in his usual place of repose.

“I do not know how it was, but that night the prayers, and entreaties, and arguments of my companions made me regard with less aversion the loss of my favourite hound, and finally to give a silent assent to his death. When I saw Joe Winn rise to get his hatchet, I rose to leave the camp, so

as not to see the last of my faithful friend. I turned, however, to take one last look, and there were his eyes fixed softly and imploringly on mine, as if he had heard all that was said, and wanted me to protect him. He did not stir from his place, but kept his eye firmly on me. The least motion of mine would have sent him headlong on Winn's throat; but he did not move. I turned away, and as I did so I heard the hatchet descend with a dull crushing sound upon his skull. The moment after I felt something touch my leg, and as I looked down I saw my hound licking my foot. The blood was pouring from a dreadful gap in his forehead, yet the noble dog had bounded, after the blow, to the feet of his master, and expended his last consciousness in this demonstration of his devotion. I could not stand it. I wept like a child."

Here Wade put his hand to his face. Touched with sympathy at the sight of this strong man in tears, I turned aside to let his emotion have its way. At length he resumed.

"Joe Winn, it was well for you at that moment that my gun was not within my reach. I forgive you; yet I shall never forget that act of yours, that deprived me of

one of the noblest and the truest of the brute creation. And poor Brutus ! that last look of yours has haunted me many a time since. Often when I gaze steadily at any object, it assumes the soft and imploring look that was the last you ever fixed upon your master ! I have not told you, Phil, of the remaining horrors of that expedition, but to me that moment was the most dreadful.

“ My share of the dog was allotted to me, but I could not touch it. I stole secretly out of camp, and buried it in the sand. My tears flowed freely over the shallow grave, and I left it with a feeling of deep and utter desolation. I suppose I was watched in my retreat, for on the next morning, when I cast one last look at the resting place, I saw that the remnant of poor Brutus had been disinterred, and gone to feast some of my famished comrades !

“ In the course of that day, all trace of the dog had disappeared. At night, after the usual report of the day's hunt had been made, it became with us a very grave question, what was next to be done. The prospect of game was utterly hopeless. The chance of returning, and the expectation from a further advance, equally desperate.

Everything had been consumed that could contribute to the support of human life, when some one—I forget now who it was—proposed that, as we were all likely to perish, it would be better to sacrifice one of us, for the sake of the rest, and commence our return immediately. This proposal was received without a solitary murmur of dissent, and it was agreed to try one more day's hunt, and, if that was unsuccessful, then to select some one of our party, who should either kill himself, or be killed by some one to be designated by some lot.

“The next day was spent as usual, and we all returned to camp, filled with dismay and the most direful forebodings. With one consent, and without one word being said, we formed ourselves into a circle. The silence was at length broken by some one proposing that the lot should be decided in the following manner:—Ten sticks, of unequal length, were to be cut, and to be placed in the ground on the end by some one blindfolded. Each man, blindfolded, was to draw. He who drew the shortest stick was to be the victim. He who drew the longest was to be the executioner.

“The twigs were cut from the wild sage, put in the ground, and each man advanced

to draw. Not a word was said. Nothing was heard save the irregular step and hurried breathing of each man as he was led, blindfolded, to the spot. The decision was at length made. It was found that I had drawn the longest twig, and the shortest had fallen to the lot of Joe Winn, the murderer of Brutus !

“I have been, Phil, to several executions—I have seen many men die ; but I never, so help me God, saw such a look of mingled dismay, despair, and mortal anguish, as that man exhibited when it was decided that he was to be the victim ! It was the most painful view in which I ever saw human nature. We all involuntarily turned away, and all that remained for the unfortunate man was to designate the way in which he would die.

“He arose from his place on the ground, and commenced speaking—

“‘Boys, the shortest stick has fallen to me, and——’

“Here his voice choked with emotion. Seeing that our faces were averted, a sudden ray of hope must have gleamed on the unfortunate man. At the next moment I felt that he had seized me by the arm, and as he did so we all heard him utter, in the most piteous and heart-rending accents—

“ Oh ! Wade, save me !—save me, Tom ! I know that you can do it if you try. If you just say so, the boys wo’nt see me killed. I know they wo’nt ! Just say so, dear Tom, and I will do anything in the world for you ! Oh ! Tom, don’t shoot me !—don’t shoot me now ! We can go one more day without food. One more day wo’nt hurt us much. I think we’ll kill something to-morrow. *You* will kill something, I know ! Oh ! don’t let me die now ! I don’t want to die now ! Oh ! save me, Tom ! I will die to-morrow without saying a single word. I killed your dog, Tom, I know ; but them other boys put me up to it. You can jest ask them about it, if you don’t believe me. If he was alive again, I wouldn’t let one of them touch a hair of his hide ! Oh ! Tom, save me ! You can save me, if you *jest* say the word ! Won’t you say it, dear Tom ? ’

“ And the fellow absolutely devoured my hand with kisses. I felt a deep loathing for such an abject coward. The allusion to Brutus had made me mad ; but a better feeling, and a strong repugnance to shed human blood, in perfect composure, prevailed ; and, turning to my comrades, I asked them to let Winn off until to-morrow night, and that

we'd try one more day's hunt. This was at once agreed to, on condition that if it became necessary Winn should be the first victim.

"We slept that night as well as we could. The dawn found us all prepared for our usual hunt, and we started in different directions, with an agreement to meet at sunset, at the present camp.

"I had spent about the day in the fruitless search for game, when my eye rested, and became in a moment intensely fixed, on the most delightful spectacle ever presented to its view. It was the fresh track in the sand of some very large animal! My heart leaped into my throat as I tightened my belt and started in pursuit. As I advanced, the sign grew fresher, until I was conscious that I was approaching the presence of the animal.

"A few steps more solved all my doubts. In a little thicket of sage I saw, for the first time in my life, a grizzly bear! We must have seen each other at the same moment, for we advanced at the same time. He was an immense animal, but nearly starved to death like myself. I raised my rifle and fired, but I must have been too much excited to take good aim. I found afterwards that my ball had taken effect in his shoulder,

but then I did not know it. We advanced towards each other until we met. I well remember his small red eye as he glared upon me, and the fierce snapping of his jaws, covered as they were with bloody foam. I had heard from old hunters of this terrible animal—that everything fled before him—that bullets had no perceptible effect on his hide, and that his attack was certain death; but if I thought of any of these things at all, they must have been lost sight of in the maddening rage inspired by the near prospect of food. If, instead of one bear, there had been a dozen, I should have thrown myself on the nearest!

“We met! I bear on this shoulder (here it is, I’ll show it to you) the mark of our first collision. I did not feel it then, though it has left, as you see, an ugly scar. I afterwards examined my first blow, and found, just behind his left shoulder, a large gap where my knife had entered. We were now hand to hand. I was determined he should not escape me. Death here was preferable to death in the camp. My antagonist seemed inspired with the same determination, and blow and thrust were given with fearful frequency, and in profound silence. We fought from the same frightful cause! Fa-



mine had rendered us both perfectly reckless of life. Oh, Brutus! how I missed you then! One good five minutes' service would have saved me many a hard blow, and many an ugly scar!

"At length a well-directed thrust, or an accidental slip in the blood, threw the bear upon his side. I was upon him in a moment! The efforts he made with his fearful claws (I have one of them at home now) nearly unseated me, but my knife was as busy as his claws. I do not know how long this contest might have lasted, or how it might have ended, but fortunately he seized my powder-horn and wallet with his teeth. I had the presence of mind to thrust them still further down his throat, and while my left hand kept them there, my right hand was busy with my knife in his side. I soon found that suffocation would ensue, if I could continue this operation long enough. I scarcely know how I managed to keep my place on his body, for his struggling efforts were tremendous. But I did hold on, and at length perceived, to my great satisfaction, that they were getting less frequent and less violent. A few moments more, and a few more thrusts, terminated the contest, and my enemy lay dead before me!

“You need not ask me what was the first thing I did. If you had been there, as I was, you would have done likewise. I cut from his palpitating carcass morsel after morsel of his quivering flesh, and devoured them, raw and bloody as they were. My next thought was of my companions. I carried with me towards the camp part of the bear, and having hidden it in the neighbourhood, I awaited the return of the party. At length they dropped in, one by one, Joe Winn last. Feeling very comfortable, in spite of my wounds, which I had bound up, I was determined to punish Winn for his cruel slaughter of my dog, and I assumed as grave and dismal a face as the agreeable state of my bowels would permit. The hunt had been, as usual, unsuccessful, and Joe’s face was the very seat of anxious terror. As soon as the report had been made, I turned to Winn—

“Well, Joe, you have heard the report; are you ready to-night?”

“I do not know whether it was the sight of blood on my clothes, whether my satisfied look was by him construed into a smile, or whether his peculiar position made him unusually observant, but certain it is, that after fixing on me the intensest look I ever

saw, he dropped on his knees and screamed between joy and anguish,

“ ‘ Oh God ! I’m saved ! I’m saved ! Tom’s killed something. Look at his clothes, look at his mouth, look at the blood and hair ! Lord God, I’m saved ! I’m saved ! ’ ”

“ And the wretch sprang to his feet, and fairly danced.

“ The latter part of this speech could not have been heard by any one save myself, for every man had started to his feet, and after surveying me for an instant, had dashed off, with Joe, into a dance, that, for wildness and fervour, would have shamed a Comanche. I soon satisfied their doubts, told them of my success, and of my having brought a part of the meat, and hidden it near the camp, and added—

“ ‘ Now, boys, you know your condition. It wo’nt do for you to cram like wolves, for it will hurt you ; but if you will go with me (and here we all started), I’ll show you the place where I hid it. Now walk up to it gently, and take a small bite, and go, at it again. Now, yonder it is, under that little patch of sage. Don’t hurry.’ ”

“ If you have ever seen a flock of wild pigeons dashing wildly through the woods, if you have ever seen a flock of partridges

scattering along madly with a hawk in full pursuit, if ever you have seen a dozen horses started for a sweepstake, you may have seen good speed—but you never have seen any running like that. I fairly screamed with laughter. *And who do you think was the first man that reached the bush—it was Joe Winn.*

“The camp that night rang with jests upon poor Joe, and shouts of laughter would go up as some one would occasionally utter, in a dolorous tone—

“ ‘Dear Tom, I’ll do anything in the world for you. Just say the word, Tom. Wo’nt you say it, dear Tom?’ ”

“On the next day we started for the remainder of the bear, and having saved everything, for fear of accident, we left for home. This provision lasted until we reached game, and we at length arrived in the settlement in safety.

## X.

## LYNCH-LAW IN THE "SUCKER STATE;"

OR,

HOW HANK HARRIS GOT SWEETENED.

THE little incident I am about to relate actually occurred at the place named, and some of the persons engaged in it can testify to the same.

About a mile above the village of C——a, on the opposite bank of the Ohio, and on that part of Kentucky known as "The Purchas," stands an old log-cabin, on a rising piece of ground some thirty yards from the river, just out of the reach of the Spring freshets, though at that time it is entirely surrounded by "back water," that covers the bottom land for miles above and below. A squatter had formerly kept a wood-yard there, though no one appeared to lay claim

to the ownership ; in fact, 'twas looked upon and used as public property.

One Sunday afternoon, two long "dug-outs," loaded with "plunder" (a term in the West for baggage, &c.), stopped at the cabin, which was then uninhabited, and shortly afterwards a smoke was seen, and several persons to be moving around. This was the family and property of Hank Harris, a large hickory-faced, bushy-headed-looking fellow, with his wife and three children. They took up their abode at the old wood-yard, and remained about three months. The history of Harris, that is, what little we heard of it, was not calculated to raise him much in the estimation of the inhabitants of C——a.

It was reported by some flat-boat men that "tied up" one night at the village, that Harris "hed left Paduky 'tween two days, and no one hed seed a site on him since ;" also that "Hank was an orful piert hand with his shootin'-iron, and as he never feed ary hog, the folks there thought he et more pork than he paid fur or come by *on the squar* ; and also, that one day Harris was kindly allowed twenty-four hours to "pack up en travel." One day Hank tied his canoe to the Illinois side, and came up

to Bill Hughes's store and exchanged some deer-skins for "store truck"—meal, and a jug of "Ole Recty," as he called it; that night screams were heard from Harris's cabin, and his boys told us "Dad hed been trainin' th' ole 'ooman with hick'ries," and as such cries were often heard, both from his wife and boys, Harris began to be shunn'd and hated. He was, when sober, silent and morose, and when in liquor (which was whenever he could get it), he was quarrelsome and fierce; he had fought several times with some of the villagers, and they were generally badly punished. Harris always carried his rifle and hunting-knife with him, which was a common thing in that country, though, as he lived just across the river, he had no use for them. A couple of snarling, ugly curs, always followed him, and he appeared to think more of them than of his children. The people of C——a were anxious to get rid of him, as some of their hogs had strayed off, and hadn't returned, but they had not sufficient cause to give him a hint "to travel." They didn't have to wait long, though, for one day, while in liquor, he beat and nearly killed an old hunter who was a general favourite with the settlers, having been in all the border wars with the red-skins.

Some dozen men met in Bill Hughes's store, and agreed to rid themselves of Harris at once; and forming themselves into a band of "Regulators," under Hughes and Bill Riley (a large powerful fellow), they laid their plans, and put them into execution at once. Two or three of them lounged in Demmit's store, where Harris was drinking and bantering the bystanders to fight. Bill Riley entered first, and as one of Harris's dogs stood *convenient*, Riley kicked in a *few* of his ribs, by way of a starter.

"Cuss you, Bill Riley, wot'd ye kick my dog fur? You'r the biggest man 'mong these yere suckers, but I ken jist knock the 'hind sites' orf er you, or ary other sneak-in' devil in this crowd."

Bill was a peaceable, honest wood-cutter, and more than a match for Harris when he (Harris) was in liquor; but it was part of the plan for Bill and Harris to quarrel, or Bill would not have kicked his dog.

"Lay down that thar shootin'-iron en knife, and you shall swaller that ar lie or yer teeth, you hog-stealin' cus!"

"Hoopee! fact," sung out Bill Hughes.

The *tools* were laid down on the counter, and they stepped out in front of the store and clinched. A western rough-and-tumble



fight is understood generally to be a "bite and gouge" affair, and I will leave the description to the imagination of the reader. I never saw a fiercer, and hope I shall never see a more bloody one. Harris soon intimated that Bill needn't *chaw his countenance any more*, and that he'd *got'nuff*.

"I've licked you in a fair fight, Hank Harris, and now we're gwine to pay fer 'busin ole Uncle Nat. Come, boys."

"I'll make buzzard's bait of some on ye fust!" yelled Harris, as he sprang to the counter for his knife and pistol. *They were gone!*

The furious struggle that man made to free himself from the hands of the Regulators, were terrible. Young as I was at the time, I shall never forget them—he raved and cursed most horribly, and fairly foamed at the mouth.

"Boys, fetch some cat-line and a rail—a good sharp 'un," sang out Riley.

"Yes, and a bar'l of tar and some feathers," said Hughes.

The two first were easily procured, but tar was not to be had, and as to feathers, the settlers in C———a were strangers to such luxuries; consequently, they were *non comatibus in swampo*.

"Boys," said Bill Hughes," go up to my store and roll down a bar'l of m'lasses: we'll *sweeten* this *hunter of Kentucky*."

"He's gin many a hog the ear-ache," said another.

Harris said not a word, but his eyes looked the fierce rage that burned within him, while his teeth were hard set and lips compressed. The barrel of molasses was brought and the head stove in.

"Now, boys, pick cotton like Mississip' niggers, while we *peal* him," said Riley.

*Peal'd*, and with hands and feet tied, Riley and Hughes lifted him and *dipped* him *candlewise* several times into the thick molasses.

"Now, then, *shut pan*, ole feller, or ye'll get *sweetened inside and out*," said Hughes, as Harris's feet cut a half circle in the air, and his head disappeared down in the barrel.

"You cussed suckers, will you strangle me?" he sputtered out when his head came to daylight.

"Wal, yes, putty much, not quite, I reckon," said one of the Regulators; and down went the bushy head again.

"*Thar, you is sweetened!*" said Riley. "Now, boys, we'll gin him a *dressin'*," and the little patches of cotton were plastered on thick.

"Thar, you look like a '*spectable white man*, Hank Harris! A gen'lman in disguise," said Hughes.

"Jist rite for them Orleans fancy-dress and masquerade balls," said another.

"If you don't keep a carriage, you shall travel by *rail-road*," said Bill Riley, as they seated him on the edge of the rail, and tied his hands and feet, and, with one on each side, trotted him about the village, giving him rather more jolting, however, than, as a passenger on a *rail-road*, he might expect.

"Thar, boys, we'll gin him a chance to pay his rent in Kentuck, and make *swankey* of the Ohio," said Hughes, as they placed him in a skiff, which they rowed to a sand-bar near the other shore; here they tied him to an old snag, and placed his rifle (without a flint) and a knife beside him, and left him there—the Ohio River *rising eight inches an hour*. As they started for the shore, the Regulators sang out—

"You won't shoot nary nuther hog, Hank Harris!"

"Nor gouge ole Uncle Nat, I reckon."

"You won't hick'ry your wife much more, ole hoss!"

"Who's buzzards' bait now, Hank Harris?"

"I'll gin yer dogs a pill as 'ill settle their stomicks for 'em, Hank."

"Buffalo fish is great on cotton, you know, Harris!"

The next morning, the bar was covered, also the snag, and Hank Harris *was not to be seen*. The Regulators visited his cabin; his family and "plunder" were gone. He would have undoubtedly been left to perish on the bar, but for his wife, who, notwithstanding his treatment of her, clung to him to the last. She went to him after dark, released him, took him home, cleansed and clothed him, and, packing up, they floated out of the Ohio and down the muddy Mississippi, and we never saw them again. Some six months after, a steam-boat got aground on the "Little Chain," about two miles above C——a, and I took my little dug-out and paddled to her, to get some good cigars and hear the news from below. From the clerk I learned that a man answering Hank Harris's description had been killed in a fight with the blacklegs at "Natchez-under-the-Hill."

## XI.

A MODEST ESTIMATE OF OUR OWN  
COUNTRY.

WHAT nation presents such a spectacle as ours, of a confederated government, so complicated, so full of checks and balances, over such a vast extent of territory, with so many varied interests, and yet moving so harmoniously ! I go within the walls of the capitol at Washington, and there, under the star-spangled banners that wave amid its domes, I find the representatives of three territories, and of twenty-four nations—nations in many senses they may be called—that have within them all the germ and sinew to raise a greater people than many of the proud principalities of Europe, all speaking one language—all acting with one heart, and all burning with the same enthusiasm—the love and glory of our common country,—even if parties do

exist, and bitter domestic quarrels now and then arise.

I take my map, and I mark whence they come. What a breadth of latitude, and of longitude too,—in the fairest portion of North America! What a variety of climate,—and then what a variety of production! What a stretch of sea-coast, on two oceans—with harbours enough for all the commerce of the world! What an immense national domain, surveyed, and unsurveyed, of extinguished, and unextinguished Indian titles within the states and territories, and without, estimated, in the aggregate, to be 1,090,871,753 acres, and to be worth the immense sum of 1,363,589,69 dollars,—750,000,000 acres of which are without the bounds of the states and the territories, and are yet to make new states and to be admitted into the Union! Our annual revenue, now, from the sales, is over three millions of dollars. Our national debt, too, is already more than extinguished,—and yet within fifty-eight years, starting with a population of about three millions, we have fought the war of independence, again not ingloriously struggled with the greatest naval power in the world, fresh with laurels won on sea and land,—and now we have a population of over

thirteen millions of souls. One cannot feel the grandeur of our republic, unless he surveys it in detail. For example, a senator in congress, from Louisiana, has just arrived in Washington. Twenty days of his journey he passed in a steam-boat on inland waters,—moving not so rapidly, perhaps, as other steam-boats sometimes move, in deeper waters,—but constantly moving, at a quick pace too, day and night.

I never shall forget the rapture of a traveller, who left the green parks of New Orleans early in March,—that land of the orange and the olive, then teeming with verdure, freshness, and life, and, as it were, mocking him with the mid-summer of his own northern home. He journeyed leisurely towards the region of ice and snow, to watch the budding of the young flowers, and to catch the breeze of the spring. He crossed the Lakes Pontchartrain and Borgne; he ascended the big Tombeckbee in a comfortable steam-boat. From Tuscaloosa, he shot athwart the wilds of Alabama, over Indian grounds, that bloody battles have rendered ever memorable. He traversed Georgia, the Carolinas, ranged along the base of the mountains of Virginia,—and for three months and more, he enjoyed one perpetual,

one unvarying, ever-coming spring,—that most delicious season of the year,—till, by the middle of June, he found himself in the fogs of the Passamaquoddy, where tardy summer was even then hesitating whether it was time to come. And yet he had not been off the soil of his own country! The flag that he saw on the summit of the fortress, on the lakes near New Orleans, was the like of that which floated from the staff on the hills of Fort Sullivan, in the easternmost extremity of Maine;—and the morning gun that startled his slumbers, among the rocky battlements that defy the wild tides of the Bay of Fundy, was not answered till many minutes after, on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. The swamps, the embankments, the cane-brakes of the Father of Waters, on whose muddy banks the croaking alligator displayed his ponderous jaws,—the cotton-fields, the rice-grounds of the low southern country,—and the vast fields of wheat and corn in the regions of the mountains, were far, far behind him:—and he was now in a Hyperborean land—where nature wore a rough and surly aspect, and a cold soil and a cold clime, drove man to launch his bark upon the ocean, to dare wind and wave, and to seek from the deep, in fisheries, and from freights, the

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treasures his own home will not give him. Indeed, such a journey as this, in one's own country, to an inquisitive mind, is worth all "the tours of Europe."

If a young American, then, wishes to feel the full importance of an American congress, let him make such a journey. Let him stand on the levee at New Orleans, and count the number and the tiers of American vessels that there lie, four, five, and six thick, on its long embankment. Let him hear the puff, puff, puff, of the high-pressure steam-boats, that come sweeping in almost every hour, perhaps from a port two thousand miles off,—from the then frozen winter of the north, to the full burning summer of the south,—all inland navigation,—fleets of them under his eye,—splendid boats, too, many of them, as the world can show,—with elegant rooms, neat berths, spacious saloons, and a costly piano, it may be,—so that travellers of both sexes can dance or sing their way to Louisville, as if they were on a party of pleasure. Let him survey all these, as they come in with products from the Red River, twelve hundred miles in one direction, or from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, two thousand miles in another direction, from the western tributaries of the

vast Mississippi, the thickets of the Arkansas, or White River,—from the muddy, far-reaching Missouri, and its hundreds of branches:—and then in the east, from the Illinois, the Ohio, and its numerous tributaries—such as the Tennessee, the Cumberland, or the meanest of which, such as the Sandy River, on the borders of Kentucky—that will in a freshet fret and roar, and dash, as if it were the Father of Floods, till it sinks into nothing, when embosomed in the greater stream, and there acknowledges its own insignificance. Let him see “the Broad Horns,” the adventurous flatboats of western waters, on which—frail bark!—the daring backwoodsman sallies forth from the Wabash, or rivers hundreds of miles above, on a voyage of atlantic distance, with hogs—horses—oxen and cattle of all kinds on board—corn, flour, wheat, all the products of rich western lands—and let him see them, too, as he stems the strong current of the Mississippi, as if the wood on which he floated were realizing the fable of the nymphs of Ida—goddesses, instead of pines.


Take the young traveller where the clear, silvery waters of the Ohio become tinged with the mud from the Missouri, and where the currents of the mighty rivers run apart for

miles, as if indignant at the strange embrace. Ascend with him farther, to St. Louis, where, if he looks upon the map, he will find that he is about as near the east as the west, and that soon, the emigrant, who is borne on the wave of population that now beats at the base of the Rocky Mountains, and anon will overleap its summits—will speak of him as he now speaks of New England, as far in the east. And then tell him that far west as he is, he is but at the beginning of steam navigation—that the Mississippi itself is navigable six or seven hundred miles upwards—and that steam-boats have actually gone on the Missouri two thousand one hundred miles above its mouth, and that they *can go* five hundred miles further still! Take him, then, from this land where the woodsman is levelling the forest every hour, across the rich prairies of Illinois, where civilization is throwing up towns and villages, pointed with the spire of the church, and adorned with the college and the school,—then athwart the flourishing fields of Indiana, to Cincinnati,—well called “the Queen of the West,”—a city of thirty thousand inhabitants, with paved streets, numerous churches, flourishing manufactories, and an intelligent society too,—and this in a State with a million of souls in it now, that

has undertaken gigantic public works,—where the fierce savages, even within the memory of the young men, made the hearts of their parents quake with fear,—roaming over the forests, as they did, in unbridled triumph,—wielding the tomahawk in terror, and ringing the war-whoop like demons of vengeance let loose from below ! Show him our immense inland seas, from Green Bay to Lake Ontario,—not inconsiderable oceans,—encompassed with fertile fields. Show him the public works of the Empire State, as well as those of Pennsylvania,—works the wonder of the world,—such as no people in modern times have ever equalled. And then introduce him to the busy, humming, thriving population of New England, from the Green Mountains of Vermont, the Switzerland of America, to the northern lakes and wide sea-coast of Maine. Show him the industry, energy, skill and ingenuity of these hardy people, who let not a rivulet run, nor a puff of wind blow, without turning it to some account,—who mingle in every thing, speculate in every thing, and dare every thing wherever a cent of money is to be earned—whose lumbermen are found not only in the deepest woods of the snowy and fearful wilds of Maine, throwing up sawmills on the lone

waterfalls, and making the woods ring with their hissing music—but found, too, on the banks of St. Lawrence, and coming also on mighty rafts of deal from every eastern tributary of the wild St. John, Meduxnekeag and Aroostook streams, whose names geographers hardly know. And then too, as if it were not enough, they turn their enterprize and form companies ‘to log and lumber,’ even on the Ocmulgee and Oconee of the state of Georgia—and on this day they are actually found in the Floridas, there planing similar schemes, and as there are no waterfalls, making steam impel their saws. Show him the banks of the Penobscot, now studded with superb villages—jewels of places, that have sprung up like magic—the magnificent military road that leads to the United States’ garrison at Houlton, a fairy spot in the wilderness, but approached by as excellent a road as the United States can boast of.

Show him the hundreds and hundreds of coasters that run up every creek and inlet of tide-water there, at times left high and dry, as if the ocean would never float them more: and then lift him above considerations of a mercenary character, and show him how New England men are perpetuating their high character and holy love of liberty,—



and how, by neat and elegant churches, that adorn every village,—by comfortable school-houses that appear every two miles or oftener upon almost every road, free for every body—high-born and low-born,—by academies and colleges, that thicken even to an inconvenience; by asylums and institutions, munificently endowed, for the benefit of the poor: and see, too, with what generous pride their bosoms swell when they go within the consecrated walls of Faneuil Hall, or point out the heights of Bunker Hill, or speak of Concord or Lexington!

Give any young man such a tour as this—the best he can make—and I am sure his heart will beat quick, when he sees the proud spectacle of the assemblage of the representatives of all these people, and all these interests, within a single hall. He will more and more revere the residue of those revolutionary patriots, who not only left us such a heritage, won by their sufferings and their blood, but such a constitution—such a government here in Washington, regulating all our national concerns—but who have also, in effect, left us twenty-four other governments, with territory enough to double them by-and-by—that regulate all the minor concerns of the people, acting

within their own sphere; now, in the winter, assembling within their various capitols, from Jefferson city, on Missouri, to Augusta, on the Kennebec;—from the capitol on the Hudson, to the government house on the Mississippi. Show me a spectacle more glorious, more encouraging than this, even in the pages of all history; such a constellation of free states, with no public force, but public opinion—moving by well-regulated law, each in its own proper orbit, around the brighter star in Washington—thus realizing, as it were, on earth, almost practically, the beautiful display of infinite wisdom, that fixed the sun in the centre, and sent the revolving planets on their errands. God grant it may end as with them!

## XII.

## THE TRAVELLING TIN-MAN.

"And indeed, sir, there are cozeners abroad; therefore it behoves men to be wary."—*Shakespeare*.

MICAJAH WARNER was owner and cultivator of a small farm in one of the oldest, most fertile, and most beautiful counties of the state of Pennsylvania, not far from the Maryland line. Micajah was a plain quaker, and a man of quiet and primitive habits. He was totally devoid of all ambitious cravings after tracts of ten thousand acres, and he aspired not to the honour and glory of having his name given to a town in the western wilderness,—though *Warnerville* would not have sounded badly—neither was he possessed of an unconquerable desire of becoming a judge, or of going to Congress. Therefore, he had always been able to resist the persuasions and example of those of his



neighbours, who left the home of their fathers, and the comforts of an old settlement, to seek a less tedious road to wealth and consequence, on the other side of the Alleghany. He was satisfied with the possession of two hundred acres, one half of which he had lent (not given) to his son Israel, who expected shortly to be married to a very pretty and very notable young woman in the neighbourhood, who was, however, no heiress.

Upon this event, Israel was to be established in an old frame house that had long since been abandoned by his father, in favour of the substantial stone dwelling which the family occupied at the period of our story. The house had been taken up and transplanted to that part of the farm now allotted to Israel, and he very prudently deferred repairing it till he saw whether it survived its progress across the domain. But as it did not fall asunder during the journey, it was judged worthy of a new front door, new window-panes, and new shingles to cover the vast chasms of the roof; all which improvements were made by Israel's own hands. This house was deposited in the vicinity of the upper branch of the creek, and conveniently near to a saw-mill which had been built by Israel in person.

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Like most of her sect, whether in town or country, Bulah, the wife of Micajah Warner, was a woman of even temper, untiring industry, and great skill in housewifery. Her daughters, commonly called Amy and Orphy, were neat, pretty little quaker girls, extremely alert, and accustomed from their earliest childhood to assist in the work of the house. As her daughters were so handy and industrious, and only went half the year to school, Mrs. Warner did not think it necessary to keep any other *help* than an indented negro girl, named Cloe.

Except the marriage of Israel, which was now in prospect; a flood in the neighbouring creek, which had raised the water so high as to wash away the brick oven from the side of the house; a tornado that carried off the roof of the old stable, and landed it whole in an adjoining clover field; and a visit from a family of beggars (an extraordinary phenomenon in the country); nothing occurred among the Warners for a long succession of years, that had occasioned more than a month's talk of the mother, and a month's listening of the children. "They kept the even tenor of their way." The occupations of Israel and his father (assisted occasionally by a few hired men) were, of course, those

of the farm, except when Israel took a day, now and then, to attend his saw-mill.

With regard to domestic arrangements, everything connected with household affairs went on in the same course year after year, except that, as the daughters of the family improved in capability of work, Cloe, the black girl, retrograded. They washed on Monday (with the assistance of a woman, hired for the day), ironed on Tuesday, performed what they called "the little baking" on Wednesday, and "the big baking" on Friday; cleaned the house on Saturday, and clear-starched their book-muslin collars; rode on horseback to Friends' meeting on Sunday morning, and visited their neighbours on Sunday afternoon.

It was the day after the one on which Israel and his bride-elect had passed meeting, and, consequently, a month before the one fixed for the wedding, that something like an adventure fell among the Warner family.

It was a beautiful evening at the close of August. The father and son had been all day in the meadows, mowing the second crop of grass; Mrs. Warner was darning stockings in the porch, with her two daughters knitting on the bench beside her; Amy being then fourteen, and Orphy about

twelve. Cloe was absent, having been borrowed by a relation, about five miles off, to do the general work of the house, while the family were engaged in preparing for a quilting frolic.

"Come, girls," said Mrs. Warner to her daughters, "it's just sun-down. The geese are coming home, and daddy and Israel will soon be here. Amy, do thee go down to the spring-house and bring up the milk and butter; and, Orphy, thee can set the table."

The two girls put up their knitting (not, however, till they had knit to the middle of the needle), and in a short time Amy was seen coming back from the spring-house, with a large pitcher of milk and a plate of butter. In the meantime, Orphy had drawn out the ponderous claw-footed walnut table that stood all summer in the porch, and, spreading over it a brown linen cloth, placed in regular order their every-day supper equipage of pewter plates, earthen porringers, and iron spoons.

The viands consisted of an immense round loaf of bread, nearly as large as a grindstone, and made of wheat and Indian meal; the half of a huge cheese, a piece of cold pork, a peach pie, and an apple pie; and, as it had been baking day, there was the customary

addition of a rice pudding, in an earthen pan of stupendous size. The last finish to the decorations of the table was a large bowl of cool water, placed near the seat occupied by the father of the family, who never could begin any of his meals without a copious draught of the pure element.

In a few minutes, the farmer and his son made their appearance as they turned the angle of the peach orchard fence, preceded by the geese, their usual avant-couriers, who went out every morning to feed in an old field beyond the meadows.

As soon as Micajah and Israel had hung up their scythes, and washed themselves at the pump, they sat down to table; the farmer in his own blue-painted, high-backed, high-armed chair; and Israel taking the seat always allotted to him, a low chair, the rushes of which having long since deserted the bottom, had been replaced by cross pieces of cloth listing, ingeniously interwoven with each other; and this being, according to the general opinion, the worst seat in the house, always fell to the share of the young man, who was usually passive on all occasions, and never seemed to consider himself entitled to the same accommodation as the rest of the family.

Suddenly, the shrill blast of a tin trumpet resounded through the woods that covered the hill in front of the house, to the great disturbance of the geese, which had settled themselves quietly for the night in their usual bivouac around the ruins of an old wagon. The Warners ceased their supper to listen and look ; and they saw emerging from the woods, and rattling down the hill at a brisk trot, the cart of one of those itinerant tin merchants, who originate in New England, and travel from one end of the Union to the other, avoiding the cities, and seeking customers among the country people ; who, besides buying their ware, always invite them to a meal and a bed.

The tin-man came blowing his horn to the steps of the porch, and there stopping his cart, addressed the farmer's wife in the true nasal twang that characterizes the lower class of New Englanders, and inquired "if she had any notion of a bargain." She replied that "she believed that she had no occasion for anything ;" her customary answers to all such questions. But Israel, who looked into futurity, and entertained views towards his own housekeeping, stepped forward to the tin cart, and began to take down and examine various mugs, pans, kettles, and

coffee-pots—the latter particularly, as he had a passion for coffee, which he secretly determined to indulge both morning and evening as soon as he was settled in his domicile.

“Mother,” said Amy, “I do wish thee would buy a new coffee-pot, for ours has been leaking all summer, and I have to stop it every morning with rye meal. Thee knows we can give the old one to Israel.”

“To be sure,” replied Mrs. Warner, “it will do well enough for young beginners. But I cannot say I feel quite free to buy a new coffee-pot at this time; I must consider about it.”

“And there’s the cullender,” said Orphy, “it has such a big crack at the bottom, that when I am smashing the squashes for dinner, not only the water but the squashes themselves drip through. Better give it to Israel, and get a new one for ourselves.”

“What’s this?” she continued, taking up a tin water dipper.

“That’s for dipping water out of the bucket,” replied the tin-man.

“Oh, yes!” cried Amy, “I’ve seen such a one at Rachel Johnson’s. What a clever thing it is! with a good long handle, so that there’s no danger of splashing the water on

our clothes. Do buy it, mother. Thee knows that Israel can have the big calabash: I patched it myself yesterday, where it was broken, and bound the edge with new tape, and it 's now as good as ever."

"I don't know," said the farmer, "that we want anything but a new lantern, for ours had the socket burnt out long before these moonlight nights, and it 's dangerous work taking a candle into the stable."

The tin-man knowing that our plain old farmers, though extremely liberal of everything that is produced on their plantations, are frequently very tenacious of coin, and much averse to parting with actual money, recommended his wares more on account of their cheapness than their goodness; and, in fact, the price of most of the articles was two or three cents lower than they could be purchased for at the stores.

Old Micajah thought there was no absolute necessity for anything except the lantern; but his daughters were so importunate for the coffee-pot, the cullender, and the water dipper, that finally all three were purchased and paid for. The tin-man in vain endeavoured to prevail on Mrs. Warner to buy some large patty pans, which the girls looked at with longing eyes; and he re-



minded them how pretty their pumpkin pies would look at their next quilting, baked in scollop-edged tins. But this purchase was peremptorily refused by the good quaker woman, alleging that scollop-edged pies were all pride and vanity, and that if properly made, they were quite good enough baked in round plates.

The travelling merchant then produced divers boxes and phials of quack medicines, prepared at a celebrated manufactory of those articles, and duly sealed with the maker's own seal, and inscribed with his name in his own handwriting. Among these, he said, "there were certain cures for every complaint in natur; draps for the agur, the tooth-ache, and the rheumatiz; salves for ring-worms, corns, frost-bitten heels, and sore eyes, and pills for consumption and fall fevers; beside that most waluable of all physic, Swaim's Wormifuge."

The young people exclaimed with one accord against the purchase of any of the medicines; and, business being over, the tin-man was invited by the farmer to sit down and take supper with the family—an invitation as freely accepted as given.

The twilight was now closing, but the full moon had risen, and afforded sufficient light

for the supper-table in the porch. The tin-man took a seat, and before Mrs. Warner had finished her usual invitation of "Stranger, reach to, and help thyself; we are poor hands at inviting, but thee's welcome to it, such as it is"—he had already cut himself a huge piece of the cold pork, and an enormous slice of bread. He next poured out a porringer of milk, to which he afterwards added one-third of the peach-pie, and several plates full of rice-pudding. He then said, "I suppose you hav'nt got no cider about the house;" and Israel, at his father's desire, immediately brought up a pitcher of that liquor from the cellar.

During supper, the tin-man entertained his entertainers with anecdotes of the roguery of his own countrymen, or rather, as he called them, his "statesmen." In his opinion of their general dishonesty, Mrs. Warner most cordially joined. She related a story of an itinerant Yankee, who persuaded her to empty some of her pillows and bolsters, under colour of exchanging with him old feathers for new—a thing which she acknowledged had puzzled her not a little, as she thought it strange that any man should bargain so badly for himself. He produced from his cart a bag of feathers which he

declared were quite new; but, after his departure, she found that he had given her such short measure that she had not half enough to fill her ticking, and most of the feathers were proved, upon examination, to have belonged to chickens rather than to geese—nearly a whole cock's tail having been found amongst them.

The farmer pointed in to the open door of the house, and showed the tin-man a large wooden clock, put up without a case between two windows, the pendulum and the weights being "exposed and bare." This clock he had bought for ten dollars of a travelling Yankee who had set out to supply the country with these machines. It had only kept tolerable time for about two months, and had ever since been getting faster and faster, though it was still faithfully wound up every week. The hands were now going merrily round at the rate of ten miles an hour, and it never struck less than twelve.

The Yankee tin-man, with a candour that excited the admiration of the whole family, acknowledged that his statesmen were the greatest rogues "on the face of the yearth;" and recounted instances of their trickery that would have startled the belief of any but the inexperienced and credulous people

who were now listening to him. He told, for example, of sausages being brought to market in the eastern towns, that when purchased and prepared for frying, were found to be filled with chopped turnip and shreds of red flannel.

For once, thought the Warners, we have found an honest Yankee.

They sat a long while at table, and though the tin-man seemed to talk all the time he was eating, the quantity of victuals that he caused to disappear surprised even Mrs. Warner, accustomed as she was to the appetite of Israel.

When the Yankee had at last completed his supper, the farmer invited him to stay all night; but he replied, "that it was moon-shiny, and fine cool travellin after a warm day; he preferred putting on towards Maryland as soon as his creatur was rested, and had a feed."

He then, without more ceremony, led his horse and cart into the barn-yard, and stopping near the stable door fed the animal by the light of the moon, and carried him a bucket of water from the pump.

The girls being reminded by their mother that it was late, and that the cows had long since come home, took their pails and

went out to milk, while she washed up the supper things. While they were milking the subsequent dialogue took place between them :

Orphy. I know it's not right to notice strangers, and to be sure the man's welcome ; but Amy, did thee ever see anybody take victuals like this Yankee ?

Amy. Yes, but he didn't eat all he took, for I saw him slip a great chunk of bread and cheese into his pocket, and then a big piece of pie, while he was talking and making us laugh.

Orphy. Well, I think a man must be very badly off to do such a thing. I wonder he did not ask for victuals to take away with him. He need not have been afraid. He must know that victuals is no object. And then he has travelled the road long enough to be sure that he can get a meal for nothing at any house he stops at, as all the tin-men do. He must have seen us looking at his eating so much, and may be his pride is hurt, and so he's made up his mind, all of a sudden, to take his meals no more at people's houses.

Amy. Then why can't he stop at a tavern, and pay for his victuals ?

Orphy. May be he don't want to spend his money in that trifling way. Who knows but

he is saving it up to help an old mother, or to buy back land, or something of that sort? I'll be bound he calculates upon eating nothing to-morrow but what he slipped off from our table.

Amy. All he took will not last him a day. It's a pity of him, anyhow.

Orphy. I wish he had not been too bashful to ask for victuals to take with him.

Amy. And still he did not strike me at all as a bashful man.

Orphy. Suppose we were just in a private way to put some victuals into his cart for him, without letting him know anything about it? Let's hide it among the tins, and how glad he'll be when he finds it to-morrow!

Amy. So we will; that's an excellent notion! I never pitied anybody so much since the day the beggars came, which was five years ago last harvest, for I have kept count ever since; and I remember it as well as if it were yesterday.

Orphy. We don't know what a hard thing it is to want victuals, as the Irish school-master used to tell us, when he saw us emptying pans of milk into the pig-trough, and turning the cows into the orchard to eat the heaps of apples lying under the trees.

Amy. Yes, and it must be much worse for

an American to want victuals, than for people from the old countries who are used to it.

After they had finished their milking, and strained and put away the milk, the kind-hearted little girls proceeded to accomplish their benevolent purpose. They took from the large wire-safe in the cellar a pie, half a loaf of bread, and a great piece of cheese ; and, putting them into a basket, they went to the barn-yard, intending to tell their mother as soon as the tin-man was gone, and not for a moment doubting her approval, since in the house of an American farmer victuals, as Orphy justly observed, is no object.

As they approached the barn-yard, they saw, by the light of the moon, the Yankee coming away from his cart and returning to the house. The girls crouched down behind the garden fence till he had passed, and then cautiously proceeded on their errand. They went to the back of the cart, intending to deposit their provisions, when they were startled at seeing something evidently alive moving behind the round opening of the cover, and in a moment the head of a little black child peeped out of the hole.

The girls were so surprised that they stopped short and could not utter a word, and the young negro, evidently afraid of being

seen, immediately popped down its head among the tins.

"Amy, did thee see that?" asked Orphy, in a low voice.

"Yes, I did so," replied Amy; "what can the Yankee be doing with that little neger, and why does he hide it? Let's go and ask the child."

"No, no!" exclaimed Orphy, "the tin-man will be angry."

"And who cares if he is?" said Amy; "he has done something he is ashamed of, and we need not be afraid of him."

They then went quite close to the back of the cart, and Amy said, "Here, little snow-ball, shew thyself and speak; and do not be afraid, for nobody's going to hurt thee."

"How did thee come into this cart?" asked Orphy, "and why does the Yankee hide thee? Tell us all about it, and be sure not to speak above thy breath."

The black child again peeped out of the hole, and looking cautiously round, said, "Are you quite sure the naughty man wo'nt hear us."

"Quite sure," answered Amy, "but is thee boy or girl?"

"I'm a little gal," replied the child; and, with the characteristic volubility of her race,



she continued, "and my name's Dinah, and I'm five year old, and my daddy and mammy are free coloured people, and they lives a big piece off, and daddy works out, and mammy sells gingerbread and molasses-beer, and we have a sign over the door with a bottle and cake on it."

Amy. But how did this man get hold of thee, if thy father and mother are free people? Thee can't be bound to him, or he need not hide thee.

Dinah. O, I know I an't bounded to him—I expect he stole me.

Amy. Stole thee! What here in the free state of Pennsylvania?

Dinah. I was out picking huckleberries in the woods up the road, and I strayed off a big piece from home. Then the tin-man comed along, driving his cart, and I run close to the road-side to look, as I always does when anybody goes by. So he told me to come into his cart, and he would give me a tin mug to put my huckleberries in, and I might choose it myself, and it would hold them a heap better than my old Indian basket. So I was very glad, and he lifted me up into the cart, and I choosed the very best and biggest tin mug he had, and emptied my huckleberries into it. And then he told me

he'd give me a ride in his cart, and then he set me far back on a box, and he whipped his creatur, and druv and druv, and jolted me so that I tumbled all down among the tins. And then he picked me up, and tied me fast with his handkercher to one of the back posts of the cart to keep me steady, he said. And then, for all I was steady, I couldn't help crying, and I wanted him to take me home to daddy and mammy. But he only sniggered at me, and said he wouldn't, and bid me hush; and then he got mad, and because I couldn't hush up just in a minute, he whipped me quite smart.

Orphy. Poor little thing!

Dinah. And then I got frightened, for he put on a wicked look, and said he'd kill me dead if I cried any more or made the least bit of noise. And so he has been carrying me along in his cart for two days and two nights, and he makes me hide away all the time, and he won't let nobody see me. And I hate him, and yesterday, when I know'd he didn't see me, I spit on the crown of his hat.

Amy. Hush!—thee must never say thee hates anybody.

Dinah. At night I sleeps upon the bag of feathers; and when he stops any where to eat, he comes sneaking to the back of the

cart and pokes in victuals (he has just now brung me some), and he tells me he wants me to be fat and good-looking. I was afeard he was going to sell me to the butcher, as Nace Willet did his fat calf, and I thought I'd ax him about it, and he laughed and told me he was going to sell me sure enough, but not to a butcher. And I'm almost all the time very sorry, only sometimes I'm not, and then I should like to play with the tins, only he won't let me. I don't dare to cry out loud, for fear the naughty man would whip me; but I always moan when we're going through woods, and there's nobody in sight to hear me. He never lets me look out of the back of the cart, only when there's nobody to see me, and he won't let me sing even when I want to. And I moan most when I think of my daddy and mammy, and how they are wondering what has become of me; and I think moaning does me good, only he stops me short.

Amy. Now, Orphy, what's to be done? The tin-man has, of course, kidnapped this black child to take her into Maryland, where he can sell her for a good price; as she is a fat, healthy-looking thing, and that is a slave state. Does thee think we ought to let him take her off?

Orphy. No, indeed! I think I could feel free to fight for her myself—that is, if fighting were not forbidden by Friends. Yonder's Israel coming to turn the cows into the clover-field. Little girl, lie quiet, and don't offer to show thyself.

Israel now advanced—"Well, girls," said he, "what's thee doing at the tin-man's cart? Not meddling among his tins, I hope? Oh! the curiosity of women-folks!"

"Israel," said Amy, "step softly—we have something to shew thee."

The girls then lifted up the corner of the cart cover, and displayed the little negro girl, crouched upon the bag of feathers—a part of his merchandize which the Yankee had not thought it expedient to produce, after hearing Mrs. Warner's anecdote of one of his predecessors.

The young man was much amazed, and his two sisters began both at once to relate to him the story of the black child. Israel looked almost indignant. His sisters said to him, "To be sure we wo'nt let the Yankee carry this child off with him."

"I judge we wo'nt," answered Israel.

"Then," said Amy, "let us take her out of the cart, and hide her in the barn or somewhere, till he has gone."

"No," replied Israel, "I can't say I feel free to do that. It would be too much like stealing her over again ; and I've no notion of evening myself to a Yankee in any of his ways. Put her down in the cart and let her alone. I'll have no underhanded work about her. Let's all go back to the house ; mother has got down all the broken crockery from the top shelf in the corner cupboard, and the Yankee's mending it with a sort of stuff like sticks of sealing-wax, that he carries about with him ; and I dare say he'll get her to pay him more for it than the things are worth. But say nothing."

The girls cautioned Dinah not to let the tin-man know that they had discovered her, and to keep herself perfectly quiet ; and they then accompanied their brother to the house, feeling very fidgetty and uneasy.

They found the table covered with old bowls, old tea-pots, old sugar-dishes, and old pitchers ; whose fractures the Yankee was cementing together, while Mrs. Warner held the candle, and her husband viewed the operation with great curiosity.

"Israel," said his mother, as he entered, "this friend is making the china as good as new, only that we can't help seeing the join ; and we are going to give all the mended things to thee."

The Yankee, having finished his work and been paid for it, said it was high time for him to be about starting, and he must go and look after his cart. He accordingly left the house for that purpose; and Israel, looking out at the end window, exclaimed, "I see he's not coming round to the house again, but he's going to try the short cut into the back road. I'll go and see that he puts up the bars after him."

Israel went out, and his sisters followed him to see the tin-man off.

The Yankee came to the bars, leading his horse with the cart, and found Israel there before him.

"Are you going to let down the bars for me?" said the tin-man.

"No," replied Israel, "I'm not going to be so polite; but I intend to see that thee carries off nothing more than belongs to thee."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the Yankee, changing colour.

"I expect I can shew thee," answered Israel. Then, stepping up to the back of the cart, and putting in his hands, he pulled out the black child and held her up before him, saying, "Now, if thee offers to touch this girl, I think we shall be apt to differ."

The tin-man then advanced towards Israel, and with a menacing look raised his whip; but the fearless young quaker (having consigned the little girl to his sisters, who held her between them) immediately broke a stick from a tree that grew near, and stood on the defensive with a most stedfast look of calm resolution.

The Yankee went close up to him, brandishing his whip; but before he had time to strike, Israel with the utmost coolness, and with great strength and dexterity, seized him by the collar, and swinging him round to some distance, flung him to the ground with such force as to stun him, saying, "Mind, I don't call myself a fighting character; but if thee offers to get up, I shall feel free to keep thee down."

The tin-man began to move, and the girls ran shrieking to the house of their father, dragging with them the little black girl, whose screams (as is usual with all of her colour) were the loudest of the loud.

In an instant the stout old farmer was at the side of his son, and, notwithstanding the struggles of the Yankee, they succeeded by main force in conveying him to the stable, into which they fastened him for the night.

Early next morning, Israel and his father

went to the nearest magistrate for a warrant and a constable, and were followed home by half the township. The county court was then in session; the tin-man was tried, and convicted of having kidnapped a free black child, with the design of selling her as a slave in one of the southern states; and he was punished by fine and imprisonment.

The Warner family would have felt more compassion for him than they did, only that all the mended china fell apart again the next day, and his tins were so badly soldered that all their bottoms came out before the end of the month.

Mrs. Warner declared that she had done with Yankee tin-men for ever, and in short with all other Yankees. But the store-keeper, Philip Thompson, who was the most sensible man of the neighbourhood, and took two Philadelphia newspapers, convinced her that some of the best and greatest men America can boast of were natives of the New England states. And he even asserted that in the course of his life (and his age did not exceed sixty-seven) he had met with no less than five *perfectly* honest Yankee tin-men; and, besides being honest, two of them were not in the least impudent. Among the latter, however, he did not, of course, include



a very handsome fellow, that a few years since made the tour of the United States with his tin-cart, calling himself the Boston Beauty, and wearing his own miniature round his neck.

To conclude,—an advertisement having been inserted in several of the papers, to designate where Dinah, the little black girl, was to be found, and the tin-man's trial having also been noticed in the public prints, in about a fortnight her father and mother (two very decent free negroes) arrived to claim her, having walked all the way from their cottage at the extremity of the next county. They immediately identified her, and the meeting was most joyful to them and to her. They told at full length every particular of their anxious search after their child, which was ended by a gentleman bringing a newspaper to their house, containing the welcome intelligence that she was safe at Micajah Warner's.

Amy and Orphy were desirous of retaining little Dinah in the family, and as the child's parents seemed very willing, the girls urged their mother to keep her instead of Cloe, who they said could be very easily made over to Israel. But, to the astonishment of the whole family, Israel on this occasion


proved refractory, declaring that he would not allow his wife to be plagued with such an imp as Cloe, and that he chose to have little Dinah himself, if her parents would bind her to him till she was eighteen. The affair was soon satisfactorily arranged.

Israel was married at the appointed time, and took possession of the house near the saw-mill. He prospered; and in a few years was able to buy a farm of his own, and to build a stone house on it. Dinah turned out extremely well, and the Warner family still talk of the night when she was discovered in the cart of the travelling tin-man.

## XIII.

## A QUILTING.

I MUST tell you, however, of a quilting which I did not share with Mr. Sibthorpe, though I wished for him many times during the afternoon. It was held at the house of a very tidy neighbour, a Mrs. Boardman, the neatness of whose dwelling and its out-works I have often admired in passing. She invited all the neighbours, and of course included my unworthy self, although I had never had any other acquaintance than that which may be supposed to result from John and Sophy's having boarded with her for some time. The walking being damp, an ox cart was sent round for such of the guests as had no "team" of their own, which is our case as yet. This equipage was packed with hay, over which was disposed, by way of *musnud*, a blue and white



coverlet; and by this arrangement half a dozen goodly dames, including myself, found reclining room, and were carried at a stately pace to Mrs. Boardman's. Here we found a collection of women busily occupied in preparing the quilt, which you may be sure was a curiosity to me. They had stretched the lining on a frame, and were now laying fleecy cotton on it with much care; and I understood from several aside remarks which were not intended for the ear of our hostess, that a due regard for etiquette required that this laying of the cotton should have been performed before the arrival of the company, in order to give them a better chance for finishing the quilt before tea, which is considered a point of honour.

However, with so many able hands at work, the preparations were soon accomplished. The "bats" were smoothly disposed, and now consenting hands, on either side,

Induced a splendid cover, green and blue,  
Yellow and red—

wherein stars and garters, squares and triangles, figured in every possible relation to each other, and produced, on the whole, a very pretty mathematical piece of work, on which the eyes of Mrs. Boardman rested with no small amount of womanly pride.

Now needles were in requisition, and every available space round the frame was filled by a busy dame. Several of the company being left-handed, or rather ambidextrous (no unusual circumstance here), this peculiarity was made serviceable at the corners, where common seamstresses could only sew in one direction, while the favoured individuals could turn their double power to double account. This beginning of the solid labour was a serious time. Scarcely a word was spoken beyond an occasional request for the thread, or an exclamation at the snapping of a needle. This last seemed of no unfrequent occurrence, as you may well suppose, when you think of the thickness of the materials, and the necessity for making at least tolerably short stitches. I must own that the most I could accomplish for the first hour was the breaking of needle and the pricking of my fingers, in the vain attempt to do as I was bid, and take my stitches "clear through."

By and by it was announced that it was time to roll—and all was bustle and anxiety. The frame had to be taken apart at the corners, and two of the sides rolled several times with much care, and at this diminished surface we began again with renewed spirit.

Now all tongues seemed loosened. The evidence of progress had raised everybody's spirits, and the strife seemed to be who should talk fastest without slackening the industry of her fingers. Some held *tête-à-tête* communications with a crony in an under tone; others discussed matters of general interest more openly; and some made observations at nobody in particular, but with a view to the amusement of all. Mrs. Vining told the symptoms of each of her five children through an attack of the measles; Mrs. Keteltas gave her opinion as to the party most worthy of blame in a late separation in the village; and Miss Polly Mittles said she hoped the quilt would not be "scant of stitches, like a bachelor's shirt."

Tea-time came before the work was completed, and some of the more generous declared they would rather finish it before tea. These offers fell rather coldly, however, for a real tea-drinker does not feel very good humoured just before tea. So Mr. Boardman drove four stout nails in the rafters overhead, corresponding in distance with the corners of the quilt, and the frame was raised and fastened to these, so as to be undisturbed and yet out of the way during the important

ceremony that was to succeed. Is it not well said that "necessity is the mother of invention?"

A long table was now spread, eked out by boards laid upon carpenters' "horses,"—and this was covered with a variety of tablecloths, all shining clean, however, and carefully disposed. The whole table array was equally various, the contributions, I presume, of several neighbouring log-houses. The feast spread upon it included every variety that ever was put upon a tea-table; from cake and preserves to pickles and raw cabbage cut up in vinegar. Pies there were, and custards, and sliced ham, and cheese; and three or four kinds of bread. I could do little besides look, and try to guess out the dishes. However, everything was very good, and our hostess must have felt complimented by the attention paid to her various delicacies. The cabbage, I think, was rather the favourite; vinegar being one of the rarities of a settler's cabin.

I was amused to see the loads of cake and pie that accumulated upon the plates of the guests. When all had finished, most of the plates seemed full. But I was told afterwards that it was not considered civil to decline any one kind of food, though your

hostess may have provided a dozen. You are expected at least to try each variety. But this leads to something which I cannot think very agreeable.

After all had left the table, our hostess began to clear it away, that the quilt might be restored to its place; and, as a preliminary, she went all round to the different plates, selecting such pieces of cake as were but little *bitten*, and paring off the half-demolished edges with a knife, in order to replace them in their original circular position in the dishes. When this was accomplished, she assiduously scraped from the edges of the plates the scraps of butter that had escaped demolition, and wiped them back on the remains of the pat. This was doubtless a season of delectation to the economical soul of Mrs. Boardman; you may imagine its effects upon the nerves of your friend. Such is the influence of habit! The good woman doubtless thought she was performing a praiseworthy action, and one in no wise at variance with her usual neat habits; and if she could have peeped into my heart, and there have read the resolutions I was tacitly making against breaking bread again under the same auspices, she would have pitied or despised such a lamentable degree



of pride and extravagance. So goes this strange world.

The quilt was replaced, and several good housewives seated themselves at it, determined to "see it out." I was reluctantly compelled to excuse myself, my inexperienced fingers being pricked to absolute rawness. But I have since ascertained that the quilt was finished that evening, and placed on Mrs. Boardman's best bed immediately; where indeed I see it every time I pass the door, as it is not our custom to keep our handsome things in the background. There were some long stitches in it, I know, but they do not shew as far as the road; so the quilt is a very great treasure, and will probably be kept as an heir-loom.

I have some thoughts of an attempt in the "patchwork" line myself. One of the company at Mrs. Boardman's remarked that the skirt of the French cambric dress I wore would make a "splendid" quilt. It is a temptation, certainly.

Mr. Sibthorpe's vexations and trials with his workmen are neither few nor small, but I shall leave the description for his pen. We never enjoyed better health, for which I fear we are not as thankful as we ought to be for so great a blessing.

## XIV.

## A RUNNING FIGHT UPON THE RACKENSAC.

IN the fall, I found myself in Little Rock, the capital of Arkansas, and very tired, too, of that "brisk" little city. I came to the determination, therefore, of leaving it, and going down the river.

As ill luck would have it, there was but one boat bent upon the downward trip, and that a small one, a very small one indeed. To look at her as she lay by the landing, she reminded you of a large hen-coop, with a stove-pipe sticking out of the roof. She was so small that the most remote point of her that you could reach from the furnace, was just near enough to subject you to the agreeable process of a slow baking; and Heaven knows an Arkansas sun is, about this season, hot enough of itself. She was named the "Olive Branch," though a less appropriate

name could hardly have been thought of—for instead of being a boat of pacific principles, she was the most quarrelsome, card-playing, whiskey-drinking little craft, it has ever been my misfortune to put my foot upon. Thoroughly tired, however, of “life in Little Rock,” I had made up my mind to leave it; so on the morning of the boat’s departure, I stepped aboard, paid my passage-money, and was soon on my way down stream. My fellow-passengers amounted to about two dozen—rough-looking fellows—hunters, planters, traders, and “legs,” all on their way for the lower country.

About ten miles below Little Rock, our captain put in to the shore, and took on board a tall lathy gentleman, with a peculiar hang-dog look, whom I had frequently seen in the city, and who went by the *sobriquet* of “THE COLONEL.” I imagine that he held some public office in the “Rackensac” capital.

The evening before our departure I had accidentally overheard the following fragment of a dialogue between him and the captain of the “Olive Branch.”

“You’ll take me through for two hundred, cap’n?”

“*Three* hundred, Ke-nel—*three*—not a figger less.”

"Too much, cap'n—say two-fifty?"

"No! three hundred—look at the risk!"

"Oh, hang the risk!"

"Besides, it hurts the repitation of the boat."

"Say you'll take two-seventy!"

"No! the even three hundred. I'll take you through as slick as goose grease—I've said it, and by —— I'll do it, in spite of all."

"Well, I suppose you must have it—here; you'll find me in Willis's Woods, ten miles below. What time will you be down?"

"By ten in the morning, or a leetle after."

"Very well, I'll wait for you."

So saying, the Colonel walked off, and I saw no more of him until he became my fellow passenger at Willis's Woods.

From what I had heard and seen, I concluded that he had found the "Rock" a little too hot for him. All this, however, was no business of mine; and getting as far from the furnace as I could, I sat down by the after guard, determined upon making myself as comfortable as circumstances would permit. The excessive heat had made me drowsy, and I soon fell fast asleep.

"They are comin', captin! they're comin'! By ——, that's old Waley on the grey! I could tell him ten miles off!"

These words, with an unusual running to and fro over the boat, awoke me from my nap, and on starting up and looking towards the shore, I beheld about a dozen horsemen coming at full gallop down the bank of the river, and apparently endeavouring to overtake the boat. They were mostly dressed in jean coats, with broad-brimmed white hats, and each of them balanced upon his left shoulder about six feet of a Kentucky rifle. They were the sheriff and his posse in pursuit of a runaway defaulter, who was supposed to be on board the "Branch."

"What's to be done, cap'n?" inquired the Colonel, evidently alarmed at the approach of the sheriff's party.

"Done! why nothing! Do you s'pose I'm goin' to let that party stop my boat?"

"But they may fire upon you!"

"Let them fire and be hang'd! Didn't I expect all that? Here, Bill! Nick! get out the muskets, and make ready to handle 'em! Look out, passengers! go to larboard and get behind the cabin! Now, Nettles, keep her close to the bank, and give 'em a wide berth! Do you hear?"

Not having any ambition to be killed in the quarrel of an Arkansas defaulter, I took the captain's hint and got behind the cabin,

where I found most of my fellow passengers already assembled. We had hardly ensconced ourselves in a safe corner, when the voice of "Old Waley" roared out from the shore—

"Stop the boat, or we'll fire into her!"

"Fire and be hang'd!" was the captain's reply.

He had hardly uttered the words, when a bullet was heard crashing through the glass top of the wheel-house. I could not help thinking that Mr. Nettles, the pilot, was placed in rather a nettlish position, but it appeared afterwards that the lower part of the wheel-house was lined with strong sheet-iron, and was bullet proof. Whether this precaution had been taken in anticipation of such skirmishes, I never learnt; at all events, it was useful in the present emergency, as Mr. Nettles in a crouching position could sufficiently manage the boat, while he was sheltered from the shot to all intents and purposes.

*Bang!—spang!—whiz!* and several bullets came crashing through the slight framework of the cabin-windows; some struck the wheel-house, while others glanced upon the iron chimneys, causing them to ring and vibrate.

But our captain, upon his side, was not idle, and a volley of musketry from the crew sent two or three of the sheriff's officers sprawling upon the bank.

In this way a running fire was kept up for several miles—the boat going at the top of her speed—while the sheriff and his posse kept pace with her, galloping along the bank, loading and firing in their stirrups.

Victory, however, declared for our captain, for the river gradually widened, and as the boat was kept closer to the larboard bank, the rifle bullets fell far short of their mark. Seeing this, the pursuing party were reluctantly compelled to halt, expressing in their looks and gestures the highest degree of anger and mortification.

“Come, boys,” shouted the captain, “give them a last volley and a cheer!”

A volley of musketry was followed by loud cheering from every part of the little boat, in which even the passengers joined, so exciting is the cheer of victory, even in a bad cause.

“Now, Kernel,” cried the captain, “I’ve got you out of a tarnal scrape—ten thousand at least—so we expect you to stand treat for all hands! Hurrah! bring on the lick!”

## XV.

## THE WAY OLD BILL WENT OFF.

FATHER WILLIAM, or, as he was familiarly known, "Old Bill," was an early settler "out West." He left the old North State when young, and settled in a choice spot, near one of our little streams. He grew and prospered, and not many years after he was married, and from that time than he a more influential personage could not be found. He was Justice of the Peace, held two or three posts of honour, and could knock daylight out of a turkey's eye two hundred yards with his favourite gun. I remember several of his exploits in shooting; and one of them would not be out of place here. I heard it from "Old Bill" himself. He had a fine young horse once, he said, stolen from his stable, and he set out to overtake the thief, taking his favourite piece along for company.



His horse was shod different from any other, and he tracked him to a thicket, through that, and for two days, when he lost sight of his track. "Here," said Old Bill, "I began to give out; but I knew the boys would laugh at me, and I'd never hear the end of it if I didn't bring him back. Presently I heard some one whistling away ahead of me, and rode fast to catch up. Turning round a bunch of vines, who should I see but the man on my horse; and just at that time he looked back and saw me. Then we had it. He spurred and I kicked, and both our horses seemed to fly. We ran almost 'mile a minit' for three hours, and neither gained an inch. He was running for life, and I for my horse. But I couldn't pull up to him no way, for he was on the best horse. I had my gun, but was afraid to shoot. I found I couldn't do any other way, for he was now a hundred yards ahead, and gaining. I raised my gun, let it fall to a gentle level, and took aim at the saddle girth. *It cut it easy one hundred and thirty yards!* and the rider fell to the ground in the saddle. I got my horse, and left the rascal whipping the saddle alone. I never heard of him after that. Whether he got to his journey's end I never heard, but *I made a good shot, and took my horse back to his paster!*"

"Old Bill," in his early days, went through many troubles, and often thought his day of grace was nearly ended. He would give up to the "*hyppo*," and when in one of his ways, he'd keep his bed for weeks at a time, trying to "settle up" accounts, but he couldn't make it out. During this time he wouldn't say a word, but "*I'm not long for this world.*" Fifteen years after his horse-race—he was getting along in years then—he went off. A deep snow covered the ground, and he could not venture beyond his door. He curled himself up in bed; and for two days his eyes were closed, and he spoke not a word. His couch was watched in silence—his pulse quick—his breathing compressed; but the fourth evening he came to. His boys, who had watched by his side, were now relieved, a good dinner was prepared, "Old Bill" ate heartily, and, after a social drink all round, the boys were for a hunt.

"You musn't go, boys—I begin to feel like going off," said Old Bill, with a sigh.

"Come, daddy, you're well—never was better in your life!" said one of the boys.

"Better not go—you shan't—you'll find me *dead* when you get back," continued the old man, returning to bed.

"But we must, daddy. We'll make a big

fire for you, and we'll have a fine roast when we return," said the boys, and off they started.

Old Bill got mad as "tucker," because the boys left him, and jumped right out of bed, put on his thick coat, went out to the wood-pile, cut a small cart-load of wood, carried it into the house, and raised a roasting fire. He then warmed his feet cleverly, undressed, jumped back into bed, and sent over for 'Squire T. to *write his will*.

The 'Squire took paper and started, but recollecting a fresh demijohn of the best French brandy, he turned back and filled a quart bottle for his use while writing the will. He found Old Bill in bed, anxiously awaiting him.

"Well, 'Squire, I'm not long for this world; I'm sinking very fast. I want you to write my will," said the old gentleman.

"Sorry to find you so low, Uncle Billy," said the 'Squire.

"I've been sinking a long time, but I kept it to myself. I don't think I shall live till morning."

The 'Squire put on his "specks," unrolled his paper, and proceeded to his duty, as Old Bill thought. He wrote along, stopping now and then to ask a few questions. He took

down the small articles first, and stopped to take a *horn*, and set the bottle on the table.

"What's that, 'Squire?" asked Old Bill, sorter bracin' himself up.

"Nothin' but *ink*, Uncle Billy," said the 'Squire.

A long list of articles was put on paper, and the 'Squire turned up the bottle again. He smacked his lips, and proceeded with due solemnity to finish his task. This done, he wiped his eyes and commenced reading.

"Draw up your chair a little closter, 'Squire."

The 'Squire did as requested, and read aloud.

"It's all right, 'Squire; but you've not got all the things down yet."

"The 'Squire stept to the door, and Old Bill reached over to the table to get the paper, but his fancied weakness prevented him.

"I'm nearly gone! Oh, them naughty boys! I knew I'd *die* before they got back; they'll see it now!"

"Well, Uncle Billy," said the 'Squire, "won't you take a glass with me before you go?"

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"Take a *what?*—what's *that?*—take a gl——," said Old Bill, sharply.

The 'Squire knew where to touch him. He had seen him that way before. He took a notion to go off every year, or every time the boys didn't go the way he wanted them. Old Bill sat up in the bed while the 'Squire handed him a glass of *brandy*. The old fellow drank it off like he was used to it.

"I'm getting better *now*, 'Squire. You needn't take down them other articles yet!"

"Suppose you get up, Uncle Bill, and let us talk over things, *before you go!*"

Old Bill's "dander riz" at that, and he with it—almost mad enough to *whip* the 'Squire. Both of them took seats by the fire; the table between them, and liquor and sweetenin' plenty. Glass after glass was laid in the shade, until both got up to the third story. The boys, meanwhile, had returned, and posted an old fiddler at the chimney corner, and then stole into the room.

"I tell you, 'Squire, I've got the *best* gun in ——," he stopped short like he heard something. "What's that?" hollered Old Bill, as the sounds came faster. "Darnad if it ain't old Josey with his fiddle. Won't you take a *reel*, 'Squire?" The 'Squire took him at his word. The boys joined them,

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and about two hours before day, the two old "hosses" were so mellow that they had to be carried to bed. And that's the "*way Old Bill went off!*"

## XVI.

## THE PRAIRIE AND THE SWAMP.

## AN ADVENTURE IN LOUISIANA.

It was a sultry September afternoon in the year 18—. My friend Carleton and myself had been three days wandering about the prairies, and had nearly filled our tin boxes and other receptacles with specimens of rare and curious plants. But we had not escaped paying the penalty of our zeal as naturalists, in the shape of a perfect roasting from the sun, which had shot down its rays during the whole time of our ramble, with an ardour only to be appreciated by those who have visited the Louisianian prairies. What made matters worse, our little store of wine had been early expended ; some taffia, with which we had replenished our flasks, had also disappeared ; and the water we met

with, besides being rare, contained so much vegetable and animal matter, as to be undrinkable unless qualified in some manner. In this dilemma, we came to a halt under a clump of hickory trees, and dispatched Martin, Carleton's Acadian servant, upon a voyage of discovery. He had assured us that we must ere long fall in with some party of Americans—or Cochon Yankees, as he called them—who, in spite of the hatred borne them by the Acadians and Creoles, were daily becoming more numerous in the country.

After waiting, in anxious expectation of Martin's return, for a full hour, during which the air seemed to get more and more sultry, my companion began to wax impatient. "What can the fellow be about?" cried he. "Give a blast on the horn," he added, handing me the instrument: "I cannot sound it myself, for my tongue cleaves to my palate from heat and drought."

I put the horn to my mouth and gave a blast. But the tones emitted were not the clear echo-awakening sounds that cheer and strengthen the hunter. They were dull and short, as though the air had lost all elasticity and vibration, and by its weight crushed back the sounds into the horn. It was a warning



of some inscrutable danger. We gazed around us, and saw that others were not wanting.

The spot where we had halted was on the edge of one of the pine forests that extend, almost without interruption, from the hills of the Cote Gelée to the Opelousa mountains, and of a vast prairie, sprinkled here and there with palmetto fields, clumps of trees, and broad patches of brushwood, which appeared mere dark specks on the immense extent of plain that lay before us, covered with grass of the brightest green, and so long as to reach up to our horses' shoulders. To the right was a plantation of palmettos, half a mile wide, and bounded by a sort of creek or gully, the banks of which were covered with gigantic cypress trees. Beyond this, more prairie and a wood of evergreen oak. To the east, an impenetrable thicket of magnolias, papaws, oak and bean trees—to the north, the pine wood before mentioned.

Such was the rich landscape we had been surrounded by a short hour before. But now, on looking around, we found the scene changed; and our horizon became far more limited by rising clouds of bluish grey vapour, which approached us rapidly from the wind quarter.

The air was so hot and parching, that our horses' coats, which a short time previously had been dripping with sweat, were now perfectly dry, and the hair plastered upon them; the animals' tongues hung out of their mouths, and they seemed panting for cooler air. "Look yonder!" cried Carleton, and he pointed to the line of the horizon, which had hitherto been of grey, lead-coloured vapour. It was now becoming reddish in the south-west quarter, and the vapour had taken the appearance of smoke. At the same time we heard a sort of distant crackling, like a heavy running-fire of musketry, and which was repeated at short intervals. Each time it was heard, our horses appeared scared and trembling.

The creek was getting rapidly wider, and the ground so swampy that it was impossible to proceed further. Seeing this, we agreed to return to the prairie, and to try if it were not cooler among the palmettos. But when we came to the place where we had crossed the creek, our horses refused to take the leap again, and it was with the greatest difficulty we at length forced them over. All this time the redness in the horizon was getting brighter, and the atmosphere hotter and drier; the smoke had spread itself over

prairie, forest, and plantations. We continued retracing our steps, as well as we could, to the spot where we had halted. "See there," said Carleton; "not half an hour ago those reeds were as fresh and green as if they had just sprung out of the earth, and now look at them—the leaves are hanging down, parched and curled up by the heat."

The whole prairie, the whole horizon to the south-west, was now one mass of dense smoke, through which the sun's disc looked scarcely brighter than a paper lantern. Behind the thick curtain which thus concealed everything from our view, we heard a low hissing like that of a multitude of snakes. The smoke was stifling and unbearable; our horses again turned panting round, and tore madly towards the creek. On reaching it we dismounted, but had the greatest difficulty to prevent them from leaping into the water. The streaks of red to our right became brighter and brighter, and gleamed through the huge dark trunks of the cypress trees. The crackling and hissing grew louder than ever. Suddenly the frightful truth flashed upon us, and at the very same moment Carleton and I exclaimed, "The prairie is on fire!"

As we uttered the words, there was a loud rustling behind us, and a herd of deer broke headlong through a thicket of tall reeds and bulrushes, and dashed up to their necks into the water. There they remained, not fifty paces from us, little more than their heads above the surface, gazing at us, as though imploring our help and compassion. We fancied we could see tears in the poor beasts eyes.

We looked behind us. On came the pillars of flame, flickering and threatening through the smoke, licking up all before them; and, at times, a gust of so hot and blasting a wind as seemed to dry the very marrow in our bones. The roaring of the fire was now distinctly audible, mingled with hissing, whistling sounds, and cracking noises, as of mighty trees falling. Suddenly a bright flame shot up through the stifling smoke, and immediately afterwards a sea of fire burst upon our aching eyeballs. The whole palmetto field was in flames.

The heat was so great, that we every moment expected to see our clothes take fire. Our horses dragged us still nearer to the creek, sprang into the water, and drew us down the bank after them. Another rustling and noise in the thicket of reeds. A

she bear, with her cubs at her heels, came towards us ; and, at the same time, a second herd of deer rushed into the water not twenty yards from where we were standing. We pointed our guns at the bears ; they moved off towards the deer, who remained undisturbed at their approach ; and there they stood bears and deer, not five paces apart, but taking no more notice of each other than if they had been animals of the same species. Most beasts now came flocking to the river. Deer, wolves, foxes, horses—all came in crowds to seek shelter in one element from the fury of another. Most of them, however, went further up the creek, where it took a north-easterly direction, and widened into a sort of lake. Those that had first arrived began to follow the new comers, and we did the same.

Suddenly the baying of hounds was heard. "Hurra! these are dogs; men must be near." A volley from a dozen rifles was the answer to our explanation. The shots were fired not two hundred yards from us, yet we saw nothing of the persons who fired them. The wild beasts around us trembled and crouched before this new danger, but did not attempt to move a step. We ourselves were standing in the midst of them up to our waists in

water. "Who goes there?" we shouted. Another volley, and this time not one hundred yards off. We saw the flashes of the pieces, and heard voices talking in a dialect compounded of French and Indian. We perceived that we had to do with Acadians. A third volley, and the bullets whistled about our ears. It was getting past a joke. "Halt!" shouted we, "stop firing till you see what you are firing at." There was a dead silence for a moment, then a burst of savage laughter. "Fire! fire!" cried two or three voices.

"If you fire," cried I, "look for out yourselves, for we shall do the same. Have a care what you are about."

"Morbleu! Sacre!" roared half a score of voices. "Who is that who dares to give us orders? Fire on the dogs!"

"If you do, we return it."

"Sacrè!" screamed the savages. "They are gentlemen from the towns. Their speech betrays them. Shoot them—the dogs, the spies! What do they want in the prairie?"

"Your blood be on your own heads," cried I. And, with the feelings of desperate men, we levelled our guns in the direction in which we had seen the flashes of the last volley. At that moment—"Halt! What

is here?" shouted a stentorian voice close to us.

"Stop firing, or you are dead men," cried five or six other voices.

"*Sacre! ce sont des Americains,*" muttered the Acadians.

"Monsieur Carleton!" cried a voice.

"Here!" replied my friend. A boat shot out of the smoke, between us and our antagonists. Carleton's servant was in it. The next moment we were surrounded by a score of Acadians and half a dozen Americans.

It appeared that the Acadians, so soon as they perceived the prairie to be on fire, had got into a boat and descended a creek that flowed into the Chicot creek, on which we now were. The beasts of the forest and prairie, flying to the water, found themselves inclosed in the angle formed by the two creeks, and their retreat being cut off by the fire, they fell an easy prey to the Acadians, wild half-savage fellows, who slaughtered them in a profusion and with a brutality that excited our disgust, a feeling which the Americans seemed to share.

"Well, stranger!" said one of the latter, an old man, to Carleton, "do you go with them Acadians, or come with us?"

"Who are you, my friends?"

"Friends!" repeated the Yankee, shaking his head, "your friendships are soon made. Friends, indeed! We ain't that yet; but if you be minded to come with us, well and good."

"I met these American gentlemen," now put in Martin, "and when they heard that you had lost your way, and were out of provisions, they were so good as to come and seek you."

"You be'n't much used to the prairie, I reckon?" observed the American who had spoken before.

"No, indeed, my friend," said I.

"I told you a'ready," replied the man with some degree of pride, "we ain't your friends; but if you choose to accept American hospitality, you're welcome."

We glanced at the Acadians, who were still firing, and dragging the beasts they slaughtered into their boat and to the shore. They appeared perfect savages, and there was little temptation to seek guidance or assistance at their hands.

"If it is agreeable to you, we will accompany you," said I to the American, making a step towards the boat. We were eager to be off, for the heat and smoke were unbearable. The Yankee answered neither yes nor no.



His attention seemed taken up by the proceedings of the Acadians.

"They're worse than Injuns," said he to a young man standing by him. "They shoot more in an hour than they could eat in a year, in their tarnation French wastefulness."

"I've a notion o' makin' 'em leave off," replied the young man.

"The country's theirs, or their masters' at least," rejoined the other. "I reckon it's no business of ours."

This dialogue was carried on with the greatest possible degree of drawling deliberation, and under circumstances in which, certainly, none but a Yankee would have thought of wasting time in words. A prairie twenty miles long and ten broad, and a couple of miles of palmetto ground, all in a blaze—the flames drawing nearer every minute, and having, in some places, already reached up to the shores of the creek. On the other side a couple of dozen wild Acadians firing right and left, without paying the least attention where or whom their bullets struck. Carleton and myself, up to our waists in water, and the Americans, chattering together as unconcernedly as if they had been sitting under the roofs of their own blockhouses.

"Do you live far from here?" said I at last to the Yankee, rather impatiently.

"Not so far as I sometimes wish," answered he, with a contemptuous glance at the Acadians; "but far enough to get you an appetite for your supper, if you ain't got one already." And taking a thin roll of tobacco out of his pocket, he bit off a piece of it, laid his hands upon the muzzle of his rifle, leant his chin upon his hands, and seemed to have forgotten all about us.

This apathy became intolerable to men in our situation.

"My good man," said I, "will you put your hospitable offer into execution, and take ——"

I could not continue, for I was literally suffocated with the heat and smoke. The very water of the creek was getting warm.

"I've a notion," said the Yankee, with his usual drawl, and apparently only just perceiving our distress, "I've a notion we had better be movin' out o' the way o' the fire. Now, strangers, in with you." And he helped Carleton and myself into the boat, where we lay down, and became insensible from heat and exhaustion.

When we recovered our senses, we found ourselves in the bottom of the boat, and the

old Yankee standing by us with a bottle of whiskey in his hand, which he invited us to take. We felt better for the cordial, and began to look around us.

Before us lay an apparently interminable cypress swamp—behind us a sheet of water, formed by the junction of the two creeks, and at present overhung by a mass of smoke that concealed the horizon from our view. From time to time there was a burst of flame that lit up the swamp, and caused the cypress trees to appear as if they grew out of a sea of fire.

“Come,” said the old Yankee, “we must go on. It is near sunset, and we have far to go.”

“And which way does our road lie?” I asked.

“Across the cypress swamp, unless you’d rather go around it.”

“The shortest road is the best,” said Carleton.

“The shortest road is the best!” repeated the Yankee contemptuously, and turning to his companions. “Spoken like a Britisher. Well, he shall have his own way, and the more so as I believe it to be as good a one as the other. James,” added he, turning to one of the men, “you go further down,

through the Snapping Turtle swamp; we will cross here."

"And our horses?" said I.

"They are grazing in the rushes. They'll be took care of. We shall have rain to-night, and to-morrow they may come round without singeing a hoof."

I had found myself once or twice upon the borders of the swamp that now lay before us, but had always considered it impenetrable, and I did not understand, as I gazed into its gloomy depths, how we could possibly cross it.

"Is there any beaten path or road through the swamp?" inquired I of the old man.

"Path or road! Do you take it for a gentleman's park? There's the path that natur' has made." And he sprang upon the trunk of a tree covered with moss and creepers, which rose out of the vast depth of mud that formed the swamp.

"*Here's* the path," said he.

"Then we will wait and come round with our horses," I replied. "Where shall we find them?"

"As you please, stranger. *We* shall cross the swamp. Only, if you can't do like your horses, and sup off bulrushes, you are likely to fast for the next twenty-four hours."

“And why so? There is game and wild-fowl for the shooting.”

“No doubt there is, if you can eat them raw like the Injuns. Where will you find, within two miles round, a square foot of dry land to make your fire on?”

To say the truth, we did not altogether like the company we had fallen amongst. These Yankee squatters bore in general but an indifferent character. They were said to fear neither God nor man, to trust entirely to their axe and their rifle, and to be little scrupulous in questions of property; in short, to be scarce less wild and dangerous than the Indians themselves.

The Yankee who had hitherto acted as spokesman, and who seemed to be in some way or other the chief of the party, was a man apparently near sixty years of age, upwards of six feet high, thin in person, but with such bone and muscle as indicated great strength in the possessor. His features were keen and sharp; his eyes like a falcon's; his bearing and manners bespoke an exalted opinion of himself, and (at least as far as we were concerned) a tolerable degree of contempt for others. His dress consisted of a jacket of skins, secured round the waist by a girdle, in which was stuck a long knife;

leather breeches, a straw hat without a brim, and mocassins. His companion was similarly accoutred.

"Where is Martin?" cried Carleton.

"Do you mean the Acadian lad who brought us to you?"

"The same."

The Yankee pointed towards the smoke. "Yonder, no doubt, with his countrymen; but I reckon their infernal hunt is over. I hear no more shots."

"I've a notion," said one of the younger men, "the stranger don't rightly know what he wants. Your horses are grazing half a mile off. You would not have had us make the poor beasts swim through the creek tied to the stern of the boat? 'Lijah is with them."

"And what will he do with them?"

"Joel is going back with the boat, and when the fire is out he will bring them round," said the elder Yankee. "You don't suppose —?" added he — He left the sentence unfinished, but a smile of scornful meaning flitted over his features.

I looked at Carleton. He nodded. "We *will* go with you," said I, "and trust entirely to your guidance."

"You do well," was the brief reply.

"Joel," added he, turning to one of the young men, "where are the torches? We shall want them?"

"Torches!" exclaimed I.

The Yankee gave me a look, as much as to say—You must meddle with every thing. "Yes," replied he; "and if you had ten lives, it would be as much as they are all worth to enter this swamp without torches." So saying, he struck fire, and selected a couple of pine splinters from several lying in the boat, he lighted them, doing everything with such extraordinary deliberation, and so oddly, that in spite of our unpleasant situation we could scarce help laughing. Meantime the boat pushed off with two men in it, leaving Carleton, myself, the old man, and another American, standing at the edge of the swamp.

"Follow me, step by step, and as if you were treading on eggs," said our leader; "and you, Jonathan, have an eye to the strangers, and don't wait till they are up to their necks in the mud to pick them out of it."

We did not feel much comforted by this speech; but mustering all our courage, we strode on after our plain-spoken guide.

We had proceeded but a very short dis-

tance into the swamp before we found out the use of the torches. The huge trunks of the cypress trees, which stood four or five yards asunder, shot up to the height of fifty feet, entirely free from branches, which then, however, spread out at right angles to the stem, making the trees appear like gigantic umbrellas, and covering the whole morass with an impenetrable roof, through which not even a sunbeam could find a passage. On looking behind us, we saw the daylight, at the entrance of the swamp, as at the mouth of a vast cavern. The further we went the thicker became the air; and at last the effluvia were so stifling and pestilential, that the torches burnt pale and dim, and more than once threatened to go out.

"Yes, yes," muttered our guide to himself, "a night passed in this swamp would leave a man ague-struck for the rest of his days. A night—ay, an hour would do it, if your pores were ever so little open; but now there's no danger; the prairie fire's good for that, dries the sweat and closes the pores."

He went on conversing thus with himself, but still striding forward, throwing his torch-light on each log or tree trunk, and trying its solidity with his foot before he trusted his weight upon it—doing all this with a dex-



terity and speed that proved his familiarity with these dangerous paths.

"Keep close to me," said he to us, "but make yourselves light—as light at least as Britishers can make themselves. Hold your breath, and —— ha! what is that log? Hollo, Nathan," continued he to himself, "what comes to you, man? Don't you know a sixteen-foot alligator from a tree?"

He had stretched out his foot, but fortunately, before setting it down, he poked what he took for a log with the butt of his gun. The supposed block of wood gave way a little, and the old squatter, throwing himself back, was within an ace of pushing me into the swamp.

"Ah, friend!" said he not in the least disconcerted, "you thought to sacumvent honest folk with your devilry and cunning."

"What is the matter?" asked I.

"Not much the matter," he replied, drawing his knife from its sheath. "Only an alligator: there it is again."

And in the place of the log, which had disappeared, the jaws of a huge alligator gaped before us. I raised my gun to my shoulder. The Yankee seized my arm.

"Don't fire," whispered he. "Don't fire, so long as you can help it. We ain't alone

here. This will do as well," he added as he stooped down, and drove his long knife into the alligator's eye. The monster gave a frightful howl, and lashed violently with its tail, besprinkling us with the black slimy mud of the swamp.

"Take that!" said the squatter with a grim smile, "and that, and that!" stabbing the brute repeatedly between the neck and the ribs, while it writhed and snapped furiously at him. Then wiping his knife, he stuck it in his belt, and looked keenly and cautiously around him.

"I've a notion there must be a tree trunk hereaway; it ain't the first time I've followed this track. There it is, but a good six foot off." And so saying he gave a spring, and alighted in safety on the stepping place.

"Have a care, man," cried I. "There is water there. I see it glitter."

"Pho, water! What you call water is snakes. Come on."

I hesitated, and a shudder came over me. The leap, as regarded distance, was a trifling one, but it was over an almost bottomless chasm, full of the foulest mud, on which the mocassin snakes, the deadliest of the American reptiles, were swarming.

"Come on!"

Necessity lent me strength, and, pressing my left foot firmly against the log on which I was standing, and which was each moment sinking with our weight deeper into the soft slimy ground, I sprang across. Carleton followed me.

"Well done!" cried the old man. "Courage, and a couple more such leaps, and we shall be getting over the worst of it."

We pushed on, steadily but slowly, never setting our foot on a log till we had ascertained its solidity with the butts of our guns. The cypress swamp extended four or five miles along the shores of the creek; it was a deep lake of black mud, covered over and disguised by a deceitful bright green veil of creeping plants and mosses, which had spread themselves in their rank luxuriance over its whole surface, and over the branches and trunks of trees scattered about the swamp. These latter were not placed with any very great regularity, but had been evidently arranged by the hand of man.

"There seems to have been a sort of path made here," said I to our guide, "for"—

"Silence!" interrupted he, in a low tone; "silence for your life, till we are on firm ground again. Don't mind the snakes," added he, as the torch-light revealed some

enormous ones lying coiled up on the moss and lianas close to us. "Follow me closely."

But just as I stretched forward my foot, and was about to place it in the very print that his had left, the hideous jaw of an alligator was suddenly stretched over the tree trunk, not six inches from my leg, and the creature snapped at me so suddenly, that I had just time to fire my gun into his glittering lizard-like eye. The monster bounded back, uttered a sound between a bellow and a groan, and, striking wildly about him in the morass, disappeared.

The American looked round when I fired, and an approving smile played about his mouth as he said something to me which I did not hear, owing to the infernal uproar that now arose on all sides of us, and at first completely deafened me.

Thousands, tens of thousands, of birds and reptiles, alligators, enormous bull-frogs, night-owls, ahingas, herons, whose dwellings were in the mud of the swamp, or on its leafy roof, now lifted up their voices, bellowing, hooting, shrieking and groaning. Bursting forth from the obscene retreat in which they had hitherto lain hidden, the alligators raised their hideous snouts out of the green coating of the swamp, gnashing their teeth

and straining towards us, while the owls and other birds circled round our heads flapping and striking us with their wings as they passed. We drew our knives, and endeavoured to defend at least our heads and eyes; but all was in vain against the myriads of enemies that surrounded us; and the unequal combat could not possibly have lasted long, when suddenly a shot was fired, followed immediately by another. The effect they produced was magical. The growls and

- cries of rage and fury were exchanged for howls of fear and complaint; the alligators withdrew gradually into their native mud; the birds flew in wider circles around us; the unclean multitudes were in full retreat. By degrees the various noises died away. But our torches had gone out, and all around us was black as pitch.

“In God’s name, are you there, old man?” asked I.

“What! still alive?” he replied, with a laugh that jarred unpleasantly upon my nerves, “and the other Britisher too? I told ye we were not alone. These brutes defend themselves if you attack them upon their own ground, and a single shot is sufficient to bring them about one’s ears. But when they see you’re in earnest, they soon get

tired of it, and a couple more shots sent among them generally drive them away again; for they are but senseless squealin' creturs after all."

While the old man was speaking he struck fire, and lit one of the torches.

" Luckily we have rather better footing here," continued he. " And, now, forward quickly; for the sun is set, and we have still some way to go."

And again he led the march, with a skill and confidence in himself which each moment increased our reliance on him. After proceeding in this manner for about half an hour, we saw a pale light glimmering in the distance.

" Five minutes more and your troubles are over; but now is the time to be cautious, for it is on the borders of these cursed swamps the alligators best love to lie."

In my eagerness to find myself once more on dry land, I scarcely heard the Yankee's words; and as the stepping places were now near together, I hastened on, and got a little in front of the party. Suddenly I felt a log on which I had just placed my foot, give way under me. I had scarcely time to call out " Halt!" when I was up to the armpits in the swamp, with every prospect of sinking still deeper.

"You *will* hurry on," said the old man, with a laugh; and at the same time, springing forward, he caught me by the hair. "Take warning for the future," added he, as he helped me out of the mud; "and look there!"

I did look, and saw half a dozen alligators writhing and crawling in the noxious slime within a few feet of us. I felt a sickening sensation, and for a moment I could not utter a word; the Yankee produced his whiskey flask.

"Take a swallow of this," said he; "but no, better wait till we are out of the swamp. Stop a little till your heart beats quieter. So, you are better now. When you've made two or three such journeys with old Nathan, you'll be quite another man. Now,—forward again."

A few minutes later we were out of the swamp, and looking over a field of palmettos that waved and rustled in the moonbeams. The air was fresh, and once more we breathed freely.

"Now then," said our guide, "a dram, and then in half an hour we are at the Salt Lick."

"Where?" asked I.

"At the Salt Lick, to shoot a deer or two for supper. Hallo! what is that?"

"A thunderclap."

"A thunderclap! You have heard but few of them in Louisiana, I guess, or you would know the difference betwixt thunder and the crack of a back-woodsman's rifle. To be sure, yonder oak wood has an almighty echo. That's James's rifle—he has shot a stag. There's another shot."

This time it was evidently a rifle shot, but re-echoed like thunder from the depths of the immense forest.

"We must let them know that we're still in whole skins, and not in the maw of an alligator," said the old man, who had been loading his rifle, and now fired it off.

In half an hour we were at the Salt Lick, where we found our guide's two sons busy disembowelling and cutting up a fine buck they had just killed, an occupation in which they were so engrossed that they scarce seemed to notice our arrival. We sat down, not a little glad to repose after the fatigues and dangers we had gone through. When hind and fore quarters, breast and back, were all divided in right huntsmanlike style, the young men looked at their father. "Will you take a bite and sup here?" said the latter, addressing Carleton and myself, "or will you wait till we get home?"



"How far is there still to go?"

"How far? With a good trotting horse, and a better road, three quarters of an hour would bring you there. You may reckon it a couple of hours."

"Then we would prefer eating something here."

"As you will."

Without more words, or loss of time, a haunch was cut off one of the hind quarters; dry leaves and branches were collected; and in one minute a fire was blazing brightly, the joint turning before it on a wooden spit. In half an hour the party was collected round a roast haunch of venison, which, although eaten without bread or any of the usual condiments, certainly appeared to us to be the very best we had ever tasted.

XVII.

A PIC-NIC AT THE SEA-SHORE.

"The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy."—*Goldsmith*.

THE Americans are certainly a gregarious people. What else but an inherent propensity can excite that passion for congregating *en masse*, which seems to pervade all classes of my countrymen whenever the almost tropical heats of our summers make nothing more desirable than to have "ample room and verge enough?"

As soon as the thermometer begins to range between 80° and 100°, the whole population becomes possessed with the idea that there is no breathing except in the atmosphere of a dense crowd; and away they all go in stages, crammed to the utmost that the law allows, and in steamboats noted for never

carrying less than four hundred passengers, to enjoy the delights of hotels and boarding-houses filled to overflowing, at places celebrated for mineral-springs or sea-bathing.

I decided, at any early age, that springs were not to my taste. I had never been in any need of the benefits supposed to be derived from drinking chalybeate waters; and I thought there was nothing, at those places, sufficiently interesting or amusing to atone for the discomforts of small, close sleeping-rooms, crowded tables, and the necessity of appearing always in grand costume: the last grievance no trifling one in warm weather, or indeed in any weather at all. But I wavered some time before I settled into the same opinion with regard to the sea-shore locations, all of which have a redeeming quality in the grandeur of the vast and magnificent ocean, with all its associations and accompaniments.

Still, the stories I heard every summer of the overflow of company, and the consequent inconveniences at the fashionable bathing-places, frightened from me all inclination to participate in the inflictions necessary to be borne by the sufferers that compose these crowds; particularly when I was told that many, on arriving at night, could not on any

terms procure either beds or bed-chambers: that gentlemen had been glad to sleep in their gigs, or on the dining-room table; that ladies had been obliged to sit up all night in their travelling dresses, for want of a spot to lie down in; and that, after dusk, there was generally a prowling through the rooms for the purpose of purloining pillows, the thieves being those unfortunate fair ones who, in the general scramble, had been able to obtain only bolsters to their beds; and that next evening the stolen pillows were stolen over again by the "last arrivals."

At length an opportunity offered of visiting the sea-shore in a private and retired way, meeting there only a select party (all of whom were people of no pretensions), and which I thought would suit me exactly. I was spending the summer at the house of a married friend (also a lady of no pretensions) in the eastern section of the state of New Jersey.

Our destination was to a part of the coast about twenty-five miles from the residence of the family with which I was staying, and as yet (but this was many years since) it could boast of neither hotel nor boarding-house. However, it had long been in great vogue as a place of annual pic-nic parties for

the sons and daughters of New Jersey—a state which, though near two centuries old, has almost as few pretensions as any one in the Union: it being, as Dr. Franklin quaintly remarked, very much like a cider barrel tapped at both ends—all the good of the western part running into Pennsylvania, and all that of the eastern division being drained off by New York.

But it is time to get fairly under-way with my narrative: I was then invited by the friends, in whose house I was a guest, to join a pic-nic party to the sea-shore. There was to be no ceremony, no form, no dressing; all the company were acquainted with each other; none were fashionable: and we were to meet only for the purpose of enjoyment. Each family was to furnish a share of the provisions; and each, like boarding-school children, were to find their own bedding and towels.

Each division was to set out from its own home, and in its own conveyance. The starting points were very far apart, but the goal was a house at Squan,\* well known to my Jersey friends as one in which shore-

\* I believe that *Squam* is the newest reading, but at the period I allude to, the word certainly terminated with an *n*. The geographers of posterity will doubtless be at great pains to settle the true version, and to their research I commit it. For myself, I shall adhere to *Squan*, as being the most familiar to me.

parties were accommodated with everything but bed and board. I understood also that the attendance of domestics was not in the bond; for how could the proprietors of this mansion be expected to furnish servants for others, when they never could get any for themselves? All this was at least novel; I was very young at the time, and thought it would be delightful.

We were to rise with the sun to commence our journey; and as—like Nelson—I always make a point of being too early, I rose with the morning star. But this was a work of supererogation, as I have often found it in similar cases; for though every one was busy preparing, no one seemed to get prepared, except myself, who was ready bonneted, with my trunk in the porch, for upwards of four hours; and it was not till nine o'clock that we *started*, as we say in America. When a journey is about to commence, why are people that live in the country so much more difficult to be started than people that live in town?

We rode in the sort of carriage best adapted to our state (that is the state of New Jersey), as it is a vehicle which goes over the sandy roads with almost the velocity of a sleigh; and originating in this part of the Union, it

has always been denominated a Jersey wagon. It is square-bodied, flat-roofed, olive-coloured, and furnished with three seats, including the one for the driver, who is generally the owner also. These carriages would be well enough only for one fault, which is that they have no springs; and therefore the passengers are "smartly exercised" by the prevailing fashion of driving at a brisk trot, whenever the heaviness of the sand does not compel the horses to a slow creep—this last was our pace on the road to Squan. Behind us followed, at a still slower gait, a true *bonâ-fide* wagon of vast strength and dimensions, conducted by two hired men (something like what in Europe are called *servants*), and loaded with baggage. This baggage consisted of trunks of apparel, boxes containing plates, dishes, knives, forks, &c.; baskets of cold provisions (for there had been extensive cooking the day before); mattresses, bolsters, pillows, and other bedding; guns and fishing-tackle; and, in short, everything that was judged *indispensably* necessary for our convenience, during the few days that we were to sojourn at a place where nothing was to be had. The inmates of the carriage, as by courtesy we called it, were my friend and her baby, her niece and myself, and an Irish

girl in the capacity of child's-maid. The gentleman sat on the front seat and drove.

The delights of our ride were not great. It was all the way through pine woods that seemed interminable, and through sand that seemed unfathomable. We saw no house, not even the cabin of a hunter, though these forests abound in wild animals. There was some relief to the monotony of the scene when we came to the traces of a recent conflagration, such as often rages in the wilderness for several days successively. We recognized its course by the large open spaces (covered with coals and ashes) that it had made in the depths of the forest ; and by the remains of blackened and half-burnt trees, with many of their trunks still standing erect amidst heaps of charred and fallen branches. And once we passed by a deep narrow valley or bottom, which had some years before been overflowed by a freshet from a neighbouring creek. The water, lodging in this ravine a long time ere it entirely subsided, had killed all the trees, which, stripped of their bark and foliage, interlaced their naked branches, and looked like an army of gigantic white skeletons.

The road was scarcely more than a path through the woods ; and the boughs meeting



across, and protruding into the carriage, frequently saluted us with a blow on the head (much to the discomfiture of our bonnets), and covered us with a shower of leaves and twigs, as we forced our way through them. Everything looked so wild and lonely that I could almost have fancied myself a thousand miles from the haunts of civilized man. We stopped once to feed the horses with some of the provender brought in the *big wagon*, and to water them at a little brook, and to refresh ourselves from one of the baskets. We then pursued our toilsome way, the sand becoming deeper and the pines more impervious. The melancholy sighing of these gloomy trees, as the breeze agitates their lofty branches, resembles no other sound that I have ever heard.

The heat had now become almost intolerable; our hands were kept in perpetual motion, trying in vain to defend ourselves from the mosquitoes that swarmed in the dark recesses of these sandy forests; the baby cried (as well it might), and we all gradually ceased to talk.

Indeed, talking had been forced work for the last three hours.

Like Lord Lovel in the song, "We rode, and we rode, and we rode our road." But

still we saw nothing of a certain wooden bridge that the explorers of these wilds designated as a land-mark, and which was to prove that we had accomplished half our journey. And then it would, of course, afford us great happiness to know that, in all probability, we should have no more than the same quantity of uncomfortableness to go through, before we entered upon the pleasures of Squan; like the poor bound boy, who on being asked why he was always wishing for June, replied, "Because, from the thirtieth of next June, I shall have but nine more years to serve."

At length we saw the waters of the creek shining through some distant trees, and we hailed with delight the first glimpse of the bridge. But when we approached, we found it broken down, so as to form a most picturesque ruin, but totally impassable for man or horse, much less for wagons. At this sight the two hired men were outrageous, and declared the supervisor ought to be fined for allowing the bridge to remain in such a condition. "Is it possible," thought I, "that these wild regions can have a supervisor, or anything that savours of the inhabited world!"

To cross the creek here was impossible, as,

though not wide, it was deep and dangerous; and the only alternative was to make a circuit round, to a place where it was said to be shallow and easily forded. But we took too wide a range in our circuit, so that we never came to any more of the creek; and, in fact went so far out of our way that we were completely bewildered; and my friend began to tell stories of the bones of lost travellers having been frequently discovered in the depths of these gloomy forests.

We had now been riding five hours, during all which time we had not seen a house. At last, that welcome spectacle saluted our eyes in the midst of a small clearing; and the men recognized it as the town of Squankum.

Squankum was a new frame house, the boards and shingles still fresh in unsullied whitish, or rather yellowishness, and the window-sashes as yet unfurnished with panes; though I have no doubt many of them were glazed before the ensuing winter. The house had as yet no sign, but in one of the front windows was a lemon sitting on the bottom of an inverted tumbler, with a bottle of liquor standing by it. Therefore we knew the edifice to be a tavern.

At the sound of our wheels the landlady ran out to the door, with children before,

behind, and on each side of her, most of the juveniles having their hands and mouths full of gingerbread; but they all absconded on finding that we were going to stop. We gladly alighted, and our men unharnessed the horses, assisted by an old negro whom we found sleeping on the cellar-door, enjoying the refreshing beams of the meridian sun. We walked up a sloping plank which was placed at the door as a substitute for steps, and entered the sitting-room, the floor of which was slippery with sand, and the walls black with flies; the furniture consisting of six tall, narrow-bottomed, yellow chairs, and a pine table painted red. One of the windows had the sash propped up with a broken shovel, the other with the mush-stick.

After awhile the landlady made her appearance in a clean cap, and handkerchief stiff-starched and highly-blued, and a short-waisted, narrow-skirted gown of dusty black bombazet, with long tight sleeves very small at the shoulders. She brought in her hand a coarse muslin shirt, at which she began to sew most vehemently as soon as she took her seat. She informed us that her husband was a squire, and that he had gone to court,—meaning the county court-house.

On being asked if we could have dinner while the horses rested, she replied that "she reckoned we could." And forthwith she called in her eldest daughter, a tall, dangling girl of fourteen, with long thin arms and very long straw-coloured hair. This girl the mother denominated "You Famey," meaning Euphemia, and ordered her to "go up chamber and put on a clean apron, and then set table and get victuals."

When victuals came, our hostess (who thought it good manners to remain with us for company) was still busily and silently engaged at her sewing; but she invited us to "sit by and reach to," which signified to go to the table and help ourselves. The family of course had dined at twelve o'clock, the usual hour for country people. It being now near three in the afternoon, our repast was evidently intended as a melange of dinner and supper, and consisted of the weakest of tea in a japanned tea-pot, and the coarsest of brown sugar in a flowered glass tumbler; a quantity of thick hard cider in a pitcher, whose ornamental device was a frightful portrait of Washington; a plate piled with sour, heavy rye-bread, which might almost have been mistaken for the pieces of iron ore that are frequently found on the sur-

face of the earth in the pine forests of Monmouth county; a fowl, split and broiled, looking like a small spread eagle, and which Famey had hunted down and killed after our arrival; a square of cold salt pork; an enormous species of sausage called a Tom Thumb; a plate of course, hard gingerbread, and another of huge pickled cucumbers nearly a foot long.

It was evident that at this early period, a taste for luxuries had not yet found its way into the town of Squankum, which I have no doubt, however, is now a city, according to the usual time requisite for the growth of cities in the republican section of the North American continent.

During our repast we were objects of great curiosity to seven children with white hair and dark brown faces, all of whom hung painfully on the window-sills with their heads in and their legs out, for the purpose of surveying us at their ease. One mischievous rogue jumped down slyly, and catching his little brother by the feet, tilted him up and pitched him, head-foremost, through the window into the room, and then ran away half laughing, half frightened. The child screamed, his sister Famey—who was waiting on table—took him up and

washed the bump on his forehead with vinegar from the pickle-dish; and the mother, laying down her sewing, ran out, and, breaking a thick switch from a newly felled tree, set off into the woods in quest of the offender. However, she soon returned from her fruitless pursuit, very much out of breath, and declaring that "she might as well sarch for a needle in a hay-stack as for Joss when he took to the woods, and that she did not expect to see no more of him till daddy came home, who, instead of whooping him as he desarved, would only egg him on to further mischief; and that poor little Madison had not the peace of a dog with him."

After this outbreak, the landlady resumed her work, and said no more, till, hearing that we were bound to Squan, she informed us that we had gone nine miles out of our road.

When dinner was over, we proceeded on our journey, and the afternoon passed on much in the same way as the morning. Towards evening we felt the freshness of the sea-air as we approached the shore; and finally we got out of the pines, and into a flat open country bounded by the ocean. We saw three or four houses that seemed several miles apart, and at length we came

to the one that was to terminate our journey. Like all the others, it was of wood, and might have been called a farm-house, only that nothing worthy the name of farming could be effected on a soil so sandy and barren. We found, however, that the attempt was made every year, but always with little or no success.

This domicile belonged to an old man and his wife, who were now its sole inhabitants, their children having long since married, and gone from them. Their wants were few, and they helped themselves along, as their neighbours did, by letting their house, during the summer season, to successive shore-parties. Where the proprietors slept and ate during the sojourn of their lodgers, was then, and still is, a mystery to me,—as every nook and corner of the house was filled, and more than filled, by the strangers and their appurtenances. I have a strong suspicion that the old couple must have “camped out.”

All the party, except ourselves, had arrived the day before. We found eight pairs of married people; one couple, to our great annoyance, being a bride and bridegroom. The only young girls were my friend's niece and myself; but as there were no beaux, we made no attempt at being belles.



When we arrived the husbands had not yet returned from fishing and shooting ; but all the wives came out to welcome us, each in a similar costume of dark gingham gowns and plain muslin collars ; their hair parted smoothly on their foreheads, and tucked behind their ears with side-combs. Most of them looked like what are called *amiable* women, that is, women of few words and fewer thoughts ; and all of them were knitting. I afterwards understood that when single they had all been romps.

As the sleeping accommodations were known to be on a very limited scale, none of the ladies, except my friend, had brought with them a female servant. But as they were all notable (an honourable characteristic of the Jersey women), they had made arrangements for executing with their own hands whatever work was necessary. Therefore, soon after our arrival, they all put on long bib-aprons of check, and forming themselves into two divisions, some set the table while the others prepared supper.

Like ourselves, each family had contributed to the general stock of provisions, by bringing in their wagons a supply of cold eatables, such as hams, sausages, pies, cheese, biscuit, bread, tea, coffee, sugar, wine, &c. ;

depending for variety on the success of the shooters and fishers.

In a short time the report of fire-arms was heard, and announced the approach of the husbands, discharging their guns before they entered the house, for fear of accidents. They were all good clever men. They brought home a few birds, and a great quantity of crabs, which were speedily cooked by their wives. This is not a very pleasant business at any time, but least of all in a warm evening in July.

At supper, the gentlemen talked of their sport, and the ladies of nothing, except the bride, who had been crying all day at the absence of her husband, and now that he had come home, she received him with reproaches for having left her so long, and tried to make him say that he had passed the day as miserably as herself. But when he, a little perversely, persisted in saying that to him it had been pleasant enough, she burst into tears, and sobbed out, "Oh! William, you don't love me!"

After supper, it was judged inexpedient to keep the candles burning, lest they should attract the musquitoes. Only very good talkers can talk well in the dark, and few of our party had much fluency even in broad

daylight; and as we were all fatigued, and there was no more to be done, and nothing more to be said, it was moved by the senior wife, that the ladies should retire to their rooms to give the gentlemen an opportunity of spreading their mattresses on the parlour-floor, that being their allotted sleeping-place, as there were only two chambers in the house. So we took lights and proceeded up stairs.

I had been trying many times during the day to persuade myself that I was in a state of great felicity, and that everything was pleasant and agreeable; but all my sophistry fell to the ground as soon as I saw our dormitory. There were two bedsteads jammed together, foot to foot, in a room so small that there was barely space to get in and out. There was not a spot for a table, chair, washing-stand, or even for a trunk; all the washing and dressing having to be performed in the passage between the rooms. The heat of our cell was intense. There was only one window, (a small one, containing but four panes), and it seemed to have been made not to open, and was found immovable. In these two beds seven persons deposited themselves. The other young lady and two of the wives occupied one; I had a place in the second with my married friend and her baby: and

direful to relate ! we were obliged to admit the servant-girl as the seventh occupant, there being no other way of bestowing her. Necessity has no law : and she stretched, or rather contracted herself, in what space was left for her on the lower part of both beds, her head on one and her feet on the other. What a night ! We were fevered with heat : suffocated for want of air : stung with musquitoes till our faces and necks were as full of lumps as the surface of a squash : the baby cried, and the maid complained frequently of being kicked in the face : no wonder when we were all tossing about the whole night. I longed to camp out.

At length, "wished morning came ;" and we were all to rise as soon as the sun was up, particularly as the said sun beamed most fiercely into our uncurtained window, directly upon the beds. The Irish girl had by her lady's order taken up the wide-awake baby at the first glimpse of dawn, and was now washing it in the passage, and trying to appease its screams by singing at the top of her voice,

"Green were the fields where my forefathers dwelt on,  
Though our farm it was small yet we were content on."

We took it in turns to make our toilets

one at a time: a business that we were unable to accomplish very thoroughly, as water was scarce, and we had but one looking-glass.

Breakfast was got in the same manner as supper, with the addition of oysters of vast size, brought to the house by a fisherman, but I could not relish them, as they were out of season, and had, I thought, a queer taste.

After breakfast the ceremony of bathing was to take place; and for that purpose we were all to proceed to the sea, which was near two miles distant from the house, part of the intervening land being a salt marsh, We equipped ourselves in the bathing-dresses we had brought with us: all the smaller wagons were prepared, and we set off to partake of a new pleasure. A narrow and precarious causeway took us over the salt marsh, which was a bottomless abyss of soft black mud, covered with long coarse grass, emitting an intolerable effluvium, and alive with mosquitoes, which rose round us in clouds and settled on us in myriads. The salt marsh was unanimously declared *not* to be pleasant. It was, however, some relief to look at the seeming anomalies that were scattered over it in the form of tall pink flowers of exceeding beauty, and such as I had never seen before.

We arrived at the beach, and were handed out of the wagons upon the level and shadeless sand, where not a rock nor even a hillock interrupted the burning glare of an unclouded sun ; and a long line of breakers were thundering and foaming tremendously against the shore, as if they brought with them the whole force of the vast Atlantic. Beyond the breakers the sea was calm and smooth, with no other motion than its own heaving undulation. We saw, far off, a ship standing towards New York, and a shallop running alongside of her to put a pilot on board.

I looked towards the north-east where the waters were lost in the immensity of distance; and I imagined them stretching across a space of three thousand miles till they bathed the cliffs of "that land where in childhood I wandered." But my reverie was interrupted by one of the gentlemen taking my hand to lead me into the surf, in which, from the violence of the waves, I found it very difficult to keep either my feet or my breath.

When we had all been in the breakers, and had all come safely out of them, there never was a set of more unlovely figures. Some of the ladies had provided themselves

with long flannel gowns and oiled silk caps, but the majority were in double calico wrappers and calico sun bonnets; and the gentlemen in old shirts and trowsers, with handkerchiefs tied round their heads. I now understood the reason of the common remark "that few matches are made at the seashore."

We were all dripping with salt water, which ran in streams from our clothes; and in this state we had to get into the wagons and ride home, there being no bathing-house in which we could change our dresses. So completely were our clothes saturated, that the bottoms of the wagons were filled with the water that dripped from them: and during the whole ride, we were obliged most painfully to hold up our feet, to keep them from being soaked in the pool.

Having returned to the house, we resumed our usual dresses; and the gentlemen, taking their dinners with them in baskets, departed in quest of their daily sport. Unluckily, I had brought no books with me, concluding that I should find sufficient amusement without them. None of the other ladies thought of books, all their stockings being of a dead white. I inquired of our hostess if she had

not a book to lend me. She produced a volume of the State Laws that belonged to her husband (he being a magistrate as well as our landlord of Squankum), and a collection of old almanacks from a square hole over the kitchen fire-place; the same hole containing also the duster, and the two smoothing irons. None of these almanacks were of later date than the year 1792: and in less than an hour I had gone through all the receipts, anecdotes, verses, and admonitions against drunkenness, and had nothing left to read but the list of District Courts, and the rates of postage throughout the Union. What would I now have given for the flattest novel that ever issued from the Minerva Press! I could even have read one of Mrs. Meeke's.

Four days and four nights passed away in unvaried sameness, only that the bride became more touchy, the knitting was finished, our stock of words had nearly run out, and our stock of provisions was beginning to fail. The last day, the eatables became scanty (some of them had long ceased to be fresh); the sporting failed, or perhaps the powder and shot: and had we remained any longer, our nic party would indeed have had "no pic-nic to pic." Therefore it was



concluded that we should all turn our steps homeward.

When the time of departure arrived, there was a wonderful brightening of faces and loosening of tongues: and I began to think that in their own houses and with all their comforts about them, the members of our party might, perhaps, be very agreeable people. It was singular, however, that they had not yet learned the difference between pleasure and pain; for I found that they still designed, next season, to pay a visit in a similar manner to the same place, as they had done for many successive summers.—“Habit is second nature,” and they had a habit of going to Squan.

## XVIII.

## THE ROBBER REGION OF MEXICO.

THE little town of Magdalena, where I breakfasted, sits behind the lake, at the foot of a glen, through which the road again enters the hills. The waters of a clear stream trickle down through its streets, and keep green the gardens of splendid orange trees which gleam behind the grey adobe walls. At the meson I gave Prieto a sheaf of *oja* and two hours' rest before starting for the town of Tequila. "*No quiere uste tomar auxilio? hay muchos ladrones en el camino*" (Don't you want a guard?—the road is full of robbers), asked the vaquero of the house. "Every traveler," he continued, "takes a guard as far as Tequila, for which he pays each man a dollar." I told him I had no particular fear of the robbers, and would try it alone. "You are very courageous," he remarked,

"but you will certainly be attacked, unless you take me as an *ausilio*."

Soon after leaving the town I met a *conducta* of a hundred soldiers, escorting about fifty specie-laden mules. The officers were finely mounted, but the men, most of whom had broad swarthy Indian faces, trudged along in the dust. Some of them greeted me with "*Como va, paisano?*" some with "How do you do?" and others with a round English oath, but all imagining, apparently, that they had made the same salutation. As I was passing, a tawny individual, riding by one of the officers, turned about and addressed me in English. He was an American, who had been several years in the country, and now on his way to California, concerning which he wanted some information. Notwithstanding he was bound to San Blas, and had all his funds packed on one of the mules, he seemed still undecided whether to embark for San Francisco; and like most of the other emigrants I met, insisted strongly on my opinion as to the likelihood of *his* success. The road now entered a narrow pass, following the dry bed of a stream, whose channel was worn about twenty feet deep in the earth. Its many abrupt twists and windings afforded unequalled chances for the guerillas,

especially as the pass was nearly three leagues in length, without a single habitation on the road. My friend, Lieut. Beale, was chased by a party of robbers, in this very place, on his express journey across Mexico, in the summer of 1848. I did not meet with a single soul, although it was not later than the middle of the afternoon. The recent passing of the *conducta* had probably frightened the robbers away from the vicinity.

After riding two hours in the hot afternoon sun, which shone down into the path, a sudden turn disclosed to me a startling change of scenery. From the depths of the scorched hills, I came at once upon the edge of a bluff several hundred feet high, down which the road wound in a steep and tortuous descent. Below and before me extended a plain of twenty miles in length, entirely covered with fields of the *maguey*. At my very feet lay the city of Tequila, so near that it seemed a stone might be thrown upon the square towers of its cathedral. The streets, the gardens, the housetops, and the motley groups of the populace, were as completely unveiled to my observation as if Asmodeus had been my travelling companion. Around the plain, which now lay basking in the mellow light of the low sun, ran a circle of mural moun-

tains, which, high and blue as they were, sank into nothing before the stupendous bulk of a black volcanic peak rising behind Tequila. The whole scene, with its warm empurpled hues, might have served, if not for the first circle of Dante's Paradise, at least for that part of Purgatory which lay next to it.

I rode down into the city, crossing several arroyos, which floods gathered by the volcano had cut deeper into the plain. At the *Meson de San Jose*—the only inn in the place—I found a large company of soldiers quartered for the night. The inner *patio* or courtyard, with its stables, well, and massive trough of hewn stone, was appropriated to their horses, and groups of swarthy privates, in dusty blue uniforms, filled the corridors. I obtained a dark room for myself, and a corner of one of the stalls for *Prieto*, where I was obliged to watch until he had finished his corn, and keep off his military aggressors. The women were all absent, and I procured a few tortillas and a cup of pepper sauce with some difficulty. The place looked bleak and cheerless after dark, and for this reason, rather than its cut-throat reputation, I made but a single stroll to the plaza, where a number of rancheros sat beside their piles of fruit and

grain, in the light of smoky torches, hoisted on poles. The meson was full of fleas, which seemed to relish my blood better than that of the soldiers, for I believe they all paid me a visit in the course of the night.

When I arose, the sun, just above the hills, was shining down the long street that led to Guadalajara. I had a journey of eighteen leagues to make, and it was time to be on the road, so, without feeding my horse, I saddled and rode away. A little more than four leagues across the plain, brought me to the town of Amatitlan, where, at a miserable mud building, dignified by the name of a meson, I ordered breakfast, and *mano de oja* for my horse. There was none in the house, but one of the neighbours began shelling a quantity of ripe ears. When I came to pay, I gave her a Mexican dollar, which she soon brought back, saying that it had been pronounced counterfeit at a *tienda*, or shop, across the way. I then gave her another, which she returned with the same story; after which I gave her a third, saying she must change it, for I would give her no more. The affairs of a few hours later caused me to remember and understand the meaning of this little circumstance. At the *tienda*, a number of fellows in greasy serapes were

grouped, drinking mescal, which they offered me. I refused to join them; "*Es la ultima vez*" (It is the last time), said one of them, though what he meant I did not then know.

It was ten in the forenoon when I left Amatitlan. The road entered on a lonely range of hills, the pedestal of an abrupt spur standing out from the side of the volcano. The soil was covered with stunted shrubs and a growth of long yellow grass. I could see the way for half a league before and behind; there was no one in sight—not even a boy arriero, with his two or three donkeys. I rode leisurely along, looking down into a deep ravine on my right, and thinking to myself—"That is an excellent place for robbers to lie in wait; I think I had better load my pistol," which I had just fired off before reaching Tequila. Scarcely had this thought passed through my mind, when a little bush beside the road seemed to rise up. I turned suddenly, and, in a breath, the two barrels of a musket were before me, so near and surely aimed that I could almost see the bullets at the bottom. The weapon was held by a ferocious-looking native, dressed in a pink calico shirt and white pantaloons; on the other side of me stood a second, covering me with another double-barrelled musket;

and, a little in the rear, appeared a third. I had walked, like an unsuspecting mouse, into the very teeth of the trap laid for me.

"Down with your pistols!" cried the first, in a hurried whisper. So silently and suddenly had all this taken place, that I sat still a moment, hardly realizing my situation. "Down with your pistols and dismount!" was repeated, and this time the barrels came a little nearer my breast. Thus solicited, I threw down my single pistol—the more readily because it was harmless—and got off my horse. Having secured the pistol, the robbers went to the rear, never for a moment losing their aim. They then ordered me to lead my horse off the road, by a direction which they pointed out. We went down the side of the ravine for about a quarter of a mile to a patch of bushes and tall grass, out of view from the road, where they halted, one of them returning, apparently to keep watch. The others, deliberately levelling their pieces at me, commanded me to lie down on my face—"la boca à tierra!" I cannot say that I felt alarmed; it had always been a part of my belief that the shadow of death falls on him, that the man doomed to die by violence feels the chill before the blow has been struck. As I never felt more



positively alive than at that moment, I judged my time had not come. I pulled off my coat and vest, at their command, and threw them on the grass, saying, "Take what you want, but don't detain me long." The fellow in a pink calico shirt, who appeared to have some authority over the other two, picked up my coat, and, one after the other, turned all the pockets inside out. I felt a secret satisfaction at his blank look, when he opened my purse and poured the few dollars it contained into a pouch he carried in his belt.

"How is it," he said, "that you have no more money?"

"I don't own much," I answered, "but there is quite enough for you."

I had, in fact, barely sufficient in coin for a ride to Mexico, the most of my funds having been invested in a draft on that city. I believe I did not lose more than twenty-five dollars by this attack. "At least," I said to the robbers, "you will not take the papers," among which was my draft. "No," he replied, "*no me valen nada.*" (They are worth nothing to me).

Having searched my coat, he took a hunting-knife which I carried—belonging, however, to Lieut. Beale—examined the blade

and point, placed his piece against a bush behind him, and came up to me, saying, as he held the knife above my head—

“Now put your hands behind you, and don’t move, or I shall strike.”

The other then laid down his musket, and advanced to bind me. They were evidently adepts in the art; all their movements were so carefully timed, that any resistance would have been against dangerous odds. I did not consider my loss sufficient to justify any dangerous risk, and did as they commanded. With the end of my horse’s lariat, they bound my wrists firmly together, and, leaving me thus secure, sat down to finish their inspection more leisurely. My feelings during this proceeding were oddly heterogeneous—at one moment burning with rage and shame at having neglected the proper means of defence, and the next ready to burst into a laugh at the decided novelty of my situation.

My blanket having been spread on the grass, everything was emptied into it. The robbers had an eye to the curious and incomprehensible, as well as useful. They spared all my letters, books, and papers, but took my thermometer, compass, and card-case, together with a number of drawing

pencils, some soap—a thing the Mexicans never use—and what few little articles of toilet I carried with me. A bag hanging at my saddle bow, containing ammunition, went at once, as well as a number of oranges and cigars in my pockets, the robbers leaving me one of the latter as a sort of consolation for my loss.

Between Mazatlan and Tepic I had carried a doubloon in the hollow of each foot, covered by the stocking. It was well they had been spent for *Prieto*, or they would else have certainly been discovered. The villains unbuckled my spurs, jerked off my boots and examined the bottoms of my pantaloons, ungirthed the saddle and shook out the blankets, scratched the heavy guard of the bit to see whether it was silver; and then, apparently satisfied that they had made the most of me, tied everything together in a corner of my best blanket.

“Now,” said the leader, when this was done, “shall we take your horse?”

This question was of course a mockery; but I thought I would try the experiment, and so answered in a very decided tone:

“No; you shall not, I must have him; I am going to Guadalajara, and I cannot get there without him. Besides, he would not answer for your business.”

He made no reply, but took up his piece, which I noticed was a splendid article and in perfect order, walked a short distance towards the road, and made a signal to the third robber. Suddenly he came back, saying:

"Perhaps you may get hungry before night—here is something to eat;" and with that he placed one of my oranges and half a dozen tortillas on the grass beside me.

"*Mil gracias*," said I, "but how am I to eat without hands?"

The other then coming up, he said, as they all three turned to leave me,

"Now we are going; we have more to carry than we had before we met you. Adios!"

This was insulting—but there are circumstances under which an insult must be swallowed.

I waited till no more of them could be seen, and then turned to my horse, who who stood quietly at the other end of the lariat.

"Now, *Prieto*," I asked, "how are we get out of this scrape?"

He said nothing, but I fancied I could detect an inclination to laugh in the twitching of his nether lip. However, I went to

work at extricating myself—a difficult matter, as the rope was tied in several knots. After tugging a long time, I made a twist which the India-rubber man might have envied, and to the great danger of my spine succeeded in forcing my body through my arms. Then, loosening the knots with my teeth, in half an-hour I was free again. As I rode off, I saw the three robbers in the distance, on the other side of the ravine.

It is astonishing how light one feels after being robbed. A sensation of complete independence came over me; my horse even seemed to move more briskly after being relieved of my blankets. I tried to comfort myself with the thought that this was a genuine adventure, worth one experience—that, perhaps, it was better to lose a few dollars than even have a robber's blood on my head; but it would not do. The sense of the outrage and indignity was strongest, and my single desire was the unchristian one of revenge. It is easy to philosophize on imaginary premises, but actual experience is the best test of human nature. Once, it had been difficult for me to imagine the feeling that would prompt a man to take the life of another; now, it was clear enough. In spite of the threats of the robbers, I looked in

their faces sufficiently to know them again, in whatever part of the world I might meet them. I recognized the leader—a thick-set, athletic man, with a short black beard—as one of the persons I had seen lounging about the *tienda*, in Amatitlan, which explained the artifice that led me to display more money than was prudent. It was evidently a preconceived plan to plunder me at all hazards, since, coming from the Pacific, I might be supposed to carry a booty worth fighting for.

I rode on rapidly, over broad, barren hills, covered with patches of chapparal, and gashed with deep arroyos. These are the usual hiding places of the robbers, and I kept a sharp look-out, inspecting every rock and clump of cactus with a peculiar interest. About three miles from the place of my encounter, I passed a spot where there had been a desperate assault eighteen months previous. The robbers came upon a camp of soldiers and traders, in the night, and a fight ensued, in which eleven of the latter were killed. They lie buried by the road-side, with a few black crosses to mark the spot, while directly above them stands a rough gibbet, on which three of the robbers, who were afterwards taken, swing in chains. I confess to a decided feeling of satisfaction,

when I saw that three at least had obtained their deserts. Their long black hair hung over their faces, their clothes were dropping in tatters, and their skeleton bones protruded through the dry and shrunken flesh. The thin pure air of the table-land had prevented decomposition, and the vultures and buzzards had been kept off by the nearness of the bodies to the road. It is said, however, that neither wolves nor vultures will touch a dead Mexican, his flesh being always too highly seasoned by the red pepper he has eaten. A large sign was fastened above this ghastly spectacle, with the words, in large letters, "*Asi castiga la ley el ladron y el asesino*" (Thus the law punishes the robber and the assassin.)

Towards the middle of the afternoon I reached a military station called La Venta, seven leagues from Guadalajara. Thirty or forty idle soldiers were laughing and playing games in the shade. I rode up to the house, and informed the officer of my loss, mentioning several circumstances by which the robbers might be identified; but the zealous functionary merely shrugged his shoulders and said nothing. A proper distribution of half the soldiers who lay idle in this guard-house would have sufficed to make the road

perfectly secure. I passed on, with a feeling of indignation against the country and its laws, and hurried my Prieto, now nearly exhausted, over the dusty plain. I had ascended beyond the tropical heats, and, as night drew on, the temperature was fresh almost to chillness. The robbers had taken my cravat and vest, and the cold wind of the mountains blowing upon my bare neck, gave me a violent nervous pain and tooth-ache, which was worse than the loss of my money. Prieto panted and halted with fatigue, for he had already travelled fifty miles; but I was obliged to reach Guadalajara, and by plying a stick in lieu of the abstracted spur, kept him to his pace. At dusk I passed through Sapopa, a small village, containing a splendid monastery, belonging to the monks of the order of Guadaloup. Beyond it, I overtook, in the moonlight, the family of a ranchero, jogging along on their mules and repeating paternosters, whether for protection against robbers or cholera I could not tell. The plain was crossed by deep, water-worn arroyos, over which the road was bridged. An hour and a half of this bleak, ghostly travel, brought me to the suburbs of Guadalajara—greatly to the relief of Prieto, for he began to stagger, and I believe could not have carried me a mile furthur.



I was riding at random among the dark adobe houses, when an old padre, in black cassock and immense shovel hat, accosted me.

"*Estrangero?*" he inquired.

"*Padre,*" said I.

"But," he continued, "do you know that it is very dangerous to be here alone?"

Several persons who were passing stopped near us, out of curiosity. "Begone!" said he, "what business have you to stop and listen to us?" Then dropping his voice to a whisper, he added—"Guadalajara is full of robbers; you must be careful how you wander about after night; do you know where to go?"

I answered in the negative.

"Then," said he, "go to the Meson de la Merced; they are honest people there, and you will be perfectly safe; come with me, and I'll shew you the way."


I followed him for some distance, till we were near the place, when he put me in the care of "*Ave Maria Santissima,*" and left. I found the house without difficulty, and rode into the courtyard. The people, who seemed truly honest, sympathized sincerely for my mishap, and thought it a great marvel that my life had been spared. For myself,

when I lay down on the tiled floor to pass another night of sleepless martyrdom to fleas and the tooth-ache, I involuntarily said, with a slight variation of Touchstone's sage reflection: "Ay, now I am in Guadalajara; the more fool I; when I was at home, I was in a better place; but travellers must be content."

## XIX.


## THE TRAPPERS.

THIS was our first camp on the prairie. On our way hither we had joined a party of four hunters or trappers, and in consequence our number was now augmented to seven. We had thrown off the lighter and more costly apparel of the settlements, and were now costumed in the rougher garments worn by the hunters of the Rocky Mountains. This consisted of a frock or hunting shirt, made of dressed buckskin, and ornamented with long and parti-coloured fringes. Our nether garments were of the same material, ornamented in the same manner, and on our feet were mocassins. Round the waist of each was a belt, supporting a brace of pistols and a long knife, the latter in a sheath made of buffalo-hide. A strip of leather passing over our right shoulders, suspended our powder-



horns and bullet-pouches under our left arms. In the latter we carried flint and steel, and small etceteras of various kinds, that had been mentioned as being useful where we procured our fit-out. Among other things, we had taken care to secure plenty of ammunition, tobacco and pipes, together with an extra supply of apparel for the cold regions towards which we were journeying, all of which were snugly stowed away in our large buffalo-skin wallets—called by the trappers “possibles,” or “possible sacks”—which were either attached to or thrown across our saddles.

In the description just given, I have been speaking of our party alone, namely, Huntly, Teddy, and myself, without regard to the trappers, who were costumed and equipped much like ourselves, with the exception that instead of horses their animals were mules; and in place of one each, they had three. They, however, were bound on a regular trapping expedition, and carried their traps with them, and took along their mules for furs; while we, going merely on adventure and not speculation, had only taken the animals on which we rode. Our horses and appendages—what we had—were all of the finest description; and our long, silver-



mounted rifles drew many a wistful look from our newly made companions. In joining them, our chief object was to learn their habits and customs in the wilderness, before we ventured forth upon our own resources; and by being somewhat liberal in supplying them with tobacco, and many small things of great value to the trapper, we secured their friendship and favour at once.

The trapper of the Rocky Mountains is a singular being. Like the boatman of the river, the sailor of the ocean, or the scout of the forest, he has peculiar characteristics, both as regards manners and dialect. Constantly exposed to danger and hardship, he becomes reckless of the one and indifferent to the other. His whole life, from beginning to end, is a constant succession of perilous adventures; and so infatuated does he become with the excitement attendant upon these, that, confine him in a settlement, and he will literally pine to death for his free mountain air and liberty to roam as he lists.

There is no polish, no sickly, sentimental refinement in his manners and conversation; but, on the contrary, all is rude, rough, blunt, and to the point. When he says a thing, he means it; and, in general, has but little deceit. With death he becomes so

familiar, that all fear of the dread king of mortality is lost. True, he clings to life with great tenacity—but then there is no whimpering and whining at his fate. When he finds his time has come to go, he stands up like a man, and takes the result with the stoicism of a martyr. He is frequently a great boaster, and, like the sailor, delights in narrating strange tales of his wonderful adventures and hair-breadth escapes. In his outward behaviour he is often sullen and morose ; but, as a general thing, his heart is in the right place. He will kill and scalp an Indian foe, with the same indifference and delight that he would shoot a bear—and yet you may trust your life and money in his hands with perfect safety. In fact, I may say, that his whole composition is a strange compound of odds and ends—of inexplicable incongruities—of good and evil.

The labour of the trapper is very severe, and his perils without number. Sometimes he traps on his own account—alone, or with two or three associates—and sometimes for a company. In the first instance, his cognomen is the “free trapper ;” in the last, the “hired hand.” In either case, however, his hardships are the same. He sets off to the mountains as soon as the spring rains are

over, and there generally remains till the approaching storms of autumn drive him to winter quarters, where his time is spent in all kinds of dissipation to which he is accessible. If he makes a fortune in the summer, he spends it in the winter, and returns to his vocation in the spring as poor as when he started the year previous; and not unfrequently worse off; for if a "free trapper," ten to one but he sacrifices his animals in some drunken, gambling spree, and is forced to go out on credit, or as a "hired hand." He braves all kinds of weather in his business, and all kinds of danger, from the common accidents of the mountains, to his conflicts with wild beasts; and wilder and more ferocious savages. But he is a philosopher, and does not mind trifles. So he escapes with a whole skin, or even with his life, he looks upon his hardships, encounters, and mishaps, only as so much literary stock, to be retailed out to his companions over a warm fire, an euchre deck, and a can of whiskey.

Seeking the best beaver regions, he scans carefully all the rivers, creeks, and rivulets in the vicinity for "beaver sign," regardless of danger. If he finds a tree across a stream, he gives it close attention, to ascertain whether

treacherous ball may not put a close to his mortal career, and all his hard earnings pass into the hands of an enemy he ever hates with the bitterness of concentrated passion. With all these dangers, and hardships, and vicissitudes, your *boná-fide* trapper loves his calling, would not be content to follow any other, and is in general a rough, jolly, dare-devil sort of fellow, who not unfrequently attains to the appointed age of man, and at last "goes under" with all the stoicism of a martyr.

Until within the last few days I had never seen a trapper; and, of course, he was to me and my companions as great an object of curiosity as would have been the aborigine himself. The four which we had joined, were genuine, *boná-fide* specimens of the mountaineers. Each had seen much service, had been more or less upon trapping expeditions, and one had actually grown grey in the hardy life of the wilderness. Each had trapped on his own hook and for others, and had scoured the country from the upper regions of Oregon to the Mexican latitude—from the States to the Pacific ocean. They were acquainted with the land in every direction—knew all the regularly organized fur companies—all the trading forts and



stations—and, consequently, were just the men to initiate us into all the peculiarities of the wilderness, all the mysteries of the trapper's life, and excite our marvellous propensities by their startling and wonderful tales.

## XX.

## AN EXTRAORDINARY COON HUNT.

I'LL proceed, plus a few preliminaries, directly to a boy's Coon Hunt. It was our custom (Harry and I) to steal from our shed room two or three times a week, after the lights were out, and the governor's deep snore resounded through wainscot and hall, and hasten beyond the garden watling to the trysting spot, where we found faithful Peter and the dogs. These latter have been alluded to as hare catchers, and being the only ones obtainable, we had to lead them or none against opossums, racoons, and ground-hogs; but through Peter's encouragements, and a dexterity acquired in many encounters, the fiercely ripping coon could seldom escape their first united grab; yet sometimes, at night, we would shake down a large male fellow on swampy grounds, where availing

himself of briars and scattered pools, I've witnessed, with unflagging excitement, a war of fifteen minutes before the brave varmint was ours. No dogs lived that had more fun in fighting, and their constant victories had infused into them an obstinate courage rarely seen.

Of Pete, the good old nigger, I have to say, that he lived in a cabin with old Aunt Jenny. He raised many chickens, and made money by their sale, but the interesting broods were sometimes pitched into by gaunt marauders of the night, and his exchequer receipts made uncomfortably deficient. These outrages Pete charged chiefly upon the racoons. *Lex talionis* was his war-cry, and forthwith he became the uncompunctious destroyer! not assuaged by their capture and death, he feasted on their carcasses and sold their skins. His exhibitions of trophies won, and the recountals of his many hunts, inflamed our desires for participations in future. He, good fellow, could not resist us, and we often ransacked together the branches of the tangled ravines, returning home in time to catch a few hours' sleep. In past times there were many prophets, but the present teems with precocities—arithmetical wonders, dramatic geniuses, and, in another line,

Harry and I were youthful prodigies. No one discovered our genius save Pete, or blazoned our prowess—but that was their misfortune, or their crime, for we cut out work and displayed conduct fit to antecede the exploits of a Cumming. Hitherto we had been able to conceal our deeds from the governor by the good management of Peter, such as cleaning our clothes and shoes very early; but one night, just at the close of winter, we did so smashing a business as to put a stopper on our hunts about those capes.

And now, most patient reader, who hast endured us thus far, place thy feet upon the mantelpiece, or indulge in some other variety of position, for the gas has escaped and we are approaching the earth.

After rendezvousing and circling the dwellings and school-houses, a half-mile's trot brought us quickly to a great coon county. Swinging over the mill-race with leap-poles, we entered at first a sloping old field covered with broom sedge and prairie grass, and terminating in briars and bushes that in their turn fringe the lower and damper grounds embraced in the ravine; the opposite side of the branch was a steep hill, gapped, as we proceeded up the stream, with several smaller

hollows. In a short time the dogs were very busy, and crowded forward so rapidly that they overtook two unfortunate opossums e'er they could gain a place of safety. The lazy and bashful rascals lay inoffensive as usual, while Peter stuck 'em like pigs, then bagged and shouldered them.

This put us in pleasant mood for the next half-hour, when the short and fierce bark of Bet, the terrier, was heard, seconded by the scarce disconnected yelps of the little fice. We had not run a hundred yards before we saw the dogs leaping up the sides of a scrubby little black-jack; what was our disappointment at perceiving only a small coon, not half grown! Pete shook it down with climbing, and the anxious Bet snapped it up alone and shook out the life, but to make it *deader* they all took a pulling grab. I had felt, I say, disappointed, but it was speedily dissipated by the dogs behaving as I had never before observed them to do. Without lagging until cheered onward to new discoveries, they dashed up the swamp at a spanking gait, Bet in the lead, on the same hot chase as the one just ended, and they hadn't run another hundred yards before they were in a whopping five-minute fight.

It seems we had invaded the pleasure

grounds and interrupted the domestic peace of an entire family. One of the juniors was the first victim of our charge; the other juniors we had either passed or overrun. The dam, who was a short distance ahead, hearing the death-cry of one that was dear, either tarried in her gait or hurried to assist. Fatal affection! it lured her to the dogs, who, in five minutes, hustled her beyond that bourne from which no coon has e'er returned.

"Look yonder, Pete!" said I.

"Golly bless my soul, Mas John! I dunno what to think; for I never see Bet do dat way b'fore—but run on you and Mas Harry, while I put dis one in de bag, and I'll catch up."

It appeared that Mr. Coon, Esq., the father of his family, had behaved disgracefully. Instead of bringing up the rear, by which—as we presently shall be convinced—he could have saved the lives of his consort and their little one if not his own, he led in the stead a furious retreat when Bet's first bark rang on his tympanum. He rallied not to the rescue like his noble and martyred companion, when the mortal wail of their young was borne on the air—he "heeded not, he cared not, he recked not for aught," but to gain some big

tree or some hollow; but the dogs were so near to his ring tail, that he was forced up an ordinary sized white oak, without a hiding-place or hollow about it, and with no other tree near. The branch was fifty yards distant, but the ground was spongy with water; numerous pools spotted the area, containing from a bushel to a hogshead of water each, and encircled by clusters of brittle and pitchy bushes; here and there was a clear space of a few yards square. There must have been an acre or two of this character of earth.

Before reaching the tree, all exclaimed, "I see him!" but getting nearer Pete said, "By Golly! Mas John, d' is two on 'em!" and so I was thinking, but Harry, who had been stooping to bring the object in a line with some bright stars, sang out—

"Pete, 'taint but one—I wonder if it's a coon."

Just then the moon emerged from a cloud, and there, plain enough, was but one coon.

"By Gemini! Mas John," exclaimed Pete, "I never see nuffin like dat b'fore; he big as a small bar. I wish we had a gun or a bull-dog; we never gwine to git *him*."

I had seen Pete do many deeds that to my youthfulness and weakness appeared great,

and ranked him as an irresistible Samson, and this time being the first in which I had seen him in doubt, it caused me to say—

“What yer talking about, old nigger!—yer gwine t’ let der coon whip yer?”

“Now, Mas Johnny, what make you tink dis child fraid o’ any coon, or any dozen on ’em. I’ll bring him down like de debbil!”

And the determined and hostile Pete ascended the tree with a stick in his mouth. As he neared the second crotch, the varmint, who had been quiet, ran out on an expanded limb, whitherwards Pete cautiously followed.

“Now, Mas John, I’m gwine to try and knock him in de head, for I’s afraid of dem dogs; de coon’s too big for him.”

And as the coon, by his movement, had shewed plainly his proportions, I scarcely knew what to think of it, for he was twice as large as any one of the hundreds I had previously seen. The dogs being under him, he wouldn’t jump off, and so Pete, being now near enough, he raised his arm to knock him in the head; but before the stick had descended, the coon, with his peculiar angry whine, rushed towards Pete in the endeavour to leap on a higher limb. The eager darky forgot his position, and, in attempting to strike the animal with the



left fist ere he had recovered from the impetus of his right-handed blow, the poor fellow fell heavily to the ground. He tried to rise, but with a groan sank back; he had broken a bone. When he told us so, little Harry, with tears for the tragedy, asked him what he should do for him. After considering a while, Pete raised on his elbow and answered—

“My little masters, I aint in much misery, but I can’t get up, and I must lay here till dey come for me from de house in de morn-ing. You better go home to bed. I’m mighty sorry, too, dat I took you all out dis night, I is, indeed; for de governor ’ll stop all our hunting, and whip you, I reckon, too; so dis ’ll be de last coon hunt we have together.”

Then, raising on his arm still higher towards the tree, he shook his now impotent fist at the squatting coon.

“Oh! Mas Johnny, I’m mad wid dat coon; I don’t want him to eat my chickens, and den say he beat Pete; and if I thought as how I could make dem dare dogs drag him here, so’s I could get my hand on him, I’d give all de world.”

I had been feeling distress and embarrassment, but as reflection shewed me clearly

that our hunts were ended, and the governor's switch the next probability—a change came over me. Pete's earnest passion inflamed me, and as I sympathized in his desire I felt strong and big; I was swelling with anger, and grew bold and reckless. Pete tried to dissuade me from climbing the tree, but I was not to be shaken in my purpose, and, with much perseverance and trouble, succeeded in reaching the first crotch. After resting a while I calculated my forces; I had on thick boots, pulled on my buckskin gloves, tied on my leather cap, buttoned my jacket, and opened my spring-back knife. I suppose, as I was very little, that the coon wasn't afraid, for he let me approach him so near that his retreat to any other part of the tree was cut off, unless over my head and body.

Knowing my weakness, I saw that my success must be the result of coolness and superior cunning. At last he came with his swinging tail, and his oo'e, oo'e, but the extended knife it was, and not my hand, that he bit so furiously. With a gash in his gums he made a backward spring, and as he tore up the bark with his teeth and claws, his gleaming and determined eyes burned upon me. Without delay he came again with a ripping charge, as if he would brush me from

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the limb that I clasped with my legs ; but, as the steadily directed knife entered his jaw, he took an incautious leap that carried him to the ground.

Now, dogs—brave dogs—dash on your foe,  
Sink deep your fangs, and drink his gore ;  
Give not the savage varmint rest—  
Hang to his throat, and crush his breast.

And they did pounce upon him, to be sure ; over in a heap they'd roll with growls, and shakings, and yelps ; there was tumbling and splashing in the pools, ripping and crashing through the elder bushes, and for half an hour there was not a steady clinch of one minute. I thought I had been occasionally mixed up in some good coon fights, but, compared to this, they were as comedy to tragedy.

I cannot recall, except by constraint, the particulars of any other, for this obtrudes itself as the fight of fights. It was invested with tragic interest—a battle, a dubious, a dangerous, and a bloody battle. A beast of the wild woods, weighing thirty pounds, agile and tenacious of life, armed with claws that would rip open a dog's belly—teeth that, like the wolf's, could bite out an entire piece, was brought to furious bay by three dogs—

the smallest not half his weight, and the largest weighing but twenty-five pounds. If it had been in his nature to fight as steadily and tenaciously as a dog, his strength and his weapons were sufficient to conquer and kill six such dogs. When he found himself unceasingly beset, and the enemy on his back whenever he turned tail, he then resorted to more offensive efforts. He seized upon the dogs, one by one; he tore and gashed the cur, making him sing out, and the poor little Tip he ripped open, broke his ribs, and tore nearly in two. I dragged the little thing near Pete, who ended its sufferings. But most determined little Bet, the terrier—more sagacious and alert, more relentless in her grip, and of braver blood, and sterner stuff altogether—gave not one coward sign; she would only withdraw her buried teeth to avoid the coon's furious ripping, then sink her muzzle still deeper in.

Up to this time we had not been able to put in a lick (Harry and I), and we stood or ran around the combatants, filled with anxiety and the utmost excitement. I had given Harry my knife, and I held Pete's stick, both watching our opportunities—we saw the game growing more serious and desperate, and waxed more eager and reckless

ourselves. Bet's true blood was making her fiercer for her wounds; but I looked for the coon's victory, unless Harry or I could assist. As the unlucky cur yelled out again, Harry ran up to use the knife; but casting off the half-scared dog, the furious animal—with Bet on her quarters seeking a deadly hold—met Harry in mad career, jerked him down, and tore his leg badly, through all his clothing. As he was about to repeat the attack he received Harry's knife in his nose, and had to turn all his energies against Bet, who pressed him harder and harder. The cur was getting so sneaky that he wouldn't grab and shake, unless he could do so somewhat safely; and, though he still helped a little, the battle was carried on chiefly by Bet and myself—I dealing blows, when I was able to do so, on the coon alone. Once he had Bet down in the water, where I thought he would drown her. I struck repeatedly with my stick, but he was so intent on keeping his advantage that he did not mind me; I was so mad at his turning it upon us so smart as to be taking one at a time, that I rushed in and tore him from dear little Bet.

With increasing fury he charged on me, and as I reached the edge of the pool he bore

me down, and give me tooth and toe-nail till my jacket was jerked to shreds, my suspenders broken, my breeches torn down, and my back scratched and gashed besides; he then jerked off my leather cap, and I felt the wild villain's teeth scraping on my skull. Ah! he scored it to me, and his marks are yet upon me. Just then dear little Bet was on him in full and unabated rage, and with a deadlier hold than ever. I felt my trickling blood and my wounds, and got raving mad.


Pete had crawled in sight, and called out "Mas Johnny, get de knife, and stick it in all de time 'fore de dam debbil gets another chance; he's been biting and hurting you; now pay him for it—dat's de way, give it him." Four or five minutes more, and the fiercest fight that I have been in or seen ended. The results I have given you, and the hour and a half seemed but a moment in passing, for the contest was rushed from first to last, danger attendant, and the excitement intense. The undaunted little terrier, forsaken by the cur, and overmatched, with many and honourable wounds, who would have fought for ever, and "never said die," to her was the victory, and she was so endeared to me afterwards that I kept her to her latest breath.

The governor and the boys, and the neighbours all, travelled for days to see us, the dogs and the battle ground, that retained traces of the encounter for a month or two thereafter. The wounded recovered, even Harry and I also, whose mothers had no idea we were out; and thus ends this glance at youthful days, transcribed from faithful memory's page.

## XXI.

## THE LUMBERER'S CAMP.

THE outfit for the lumberer's camp having arrived upon the territory previously explored, arrangements are at once made to locate and build our winter camps. To determine upon the best point is by no means an easy task, it being very difficult to fix upon the location in a strange and imperfectly explored forest. Wood and water privileges are to be taken into account; a central position in respect to the timber; the landing, the locating of the main roads, &c., are to be attended to. To combine all these qualities, where we can see only a few rods in advance on account of the trees and thickets, and our work must necessarily cover hundreds of acres of wild land, it must be confessed is no ordinary task. I have seldom taxed my judgment as severely





on any subject as in judiciously locating a logging establishment.

These preliminaries being settled, we commence "right merrily" our camp. The top strata of leaves and turf are removed from the spot upon which the structure is to be erected; this is necessary, as we should otherwise be in great danger of fire from the dry turf. While this process is going forward, others are engaged in felling the trees on the spot, and cutting them the length determined upon for our edifice. The work commences by throwing the larger logs into a square, notching the ends together. Thus one tier after another is laid up until the walls attain the proper height, the smallest logs being used to finish out the upper tiers. In form they resemble a tin baker, rising some eight feet in front, while the roof pitches down within two or three feet of the ground in the rear. A double camp is constructed by putting two such squares face to face, with the fire in the middle. The spruce tree is generally selected for camp building, it being light, straight, and quite free from sap. The roof is covered with shingles from three to four feet in length. These are split from trees of straight and easy rift, such as the pine, spruce, and cedar. The shingles

are not nailed on, but secured in their place by laying a long heavy pole across each tier or course. The roof is finally covered with the boughs of the fir, spruce, and hemlock, so that when the snow falls upon the whole, the warmth of the camp is preserved in the coldest weather. The crevices between the logs constituting the walls are tightly calked with moss gathered from surrounding trees.

The interior arrangement is very simple. One section of the area of the camp is used for the dining-room, another for the sleeping apartment, and a third is appropriated to the kitchen. These apartments are not denoted by partitioned walls, but simply by small poles from six inches in diameter, laid upon the floor of the camp (which is the pure loam) running in various directions, and thus forming square areas of different dimensions, and appropriated as above suggested. The head-board to our bed consists of one or more logs, which form also the back wall of the camp. The foot-board is a small pole, some four or six feet from the fire. Our bedstead is mother earth, upon whose cool but maternal bosom we strew a thick coating of hemlock, cedar, and fir boughs. The width of this bed is determined by the number of occupants, varying from ten to twenty

feet. Bed-clothes are suited to the width of the bed by sewing quilts and blankets together. The occupants as a general thing, throw off their outer garments only when they "turn in" for the night. These hardy sons of the forest envy not those who roll on beds of down; their sleep is sound and invigorating; they need not court the gentle spell, turning from side to side, but, quietly submitting, sink into its profound depths.

Directly over the foot-pole, running parallel with it, and in front of the fire, is the "*deacon seat*." I think it would puzzle the greatest lexicographer of the age to define the word, or give its etymology as applied to a seat, which indeed it is, and nothing more nor less than a seat; but, so far as I can discover from those most deeply learned in the anti-quarianism of the logging swamp, it has nothing more to do with deacons, or deacons with it, than with the pope. The seat itself, though the name be involved in a mystery, is nothing less nor more than a plank hewn from the trunk of a spruce-tree some four inches thick by twelve inches wide, the length generally corresponding with the width of the bed, raised some eighteen inches above the foot-pole, and made stationary. This seat constitutes our sofa or settee, to

which we add a few stools, which make up the principal part of our camp furniture. Should any of my readers ever be situated beyond the reach of cabinet-makers, but in the vicinity of the forest, I may introduce them into the secret of chair-making without the necessity of any tools except an axe. Split the top part of a trunk of a Spruce or fir-tree in halves, cut a stick of the right length upon which three or four stout limbs grow; trim off the limbs of a sufficient length to suit your fancy; smooth the piece of timber to which they adhere by hewing, and your seat is completed. I can assure the reader that the instances are rare in which it becomes necessary to send them to the cabinet-maker for repairs, especially to have the legs glued in.

The luxury of a temporary table is now pretty generally enjoyed, with plates, knives and forks, tin dippers for tea and coffee, and sometimes cups and saucers. Formerly the deacon seat was used instead of a table, and a large frying-pan served for a platter for the whole crew. Around this the men would gather, each putting in his bread or potato, and salt fish, to sop in the pork fat; and never did king or courtier enjoy the luxuries of a palace more exquisitely than do our

loggers this homely fare. On the St. Croix River, lumbermen generally adhere, from choice, to the original custom of eating from the frying-pan. Bread and beans are baked in a large "Dutch oven," which is placed in a hole dug in the earth by the side of the fire, and entirely covered with hot coals and embers. In this position it is allowed to remain until the contents are done, when the ashes and cover are removed. I need not presume to inform the skilful cook that this mode of baking is unequalled. Our camp-fire is made on the ground next to the front wall, which is sometimes protected by a tier of large stones, but in other instances we simply set up two short stakes, against which enormous back-logs rest. After supper, each night unfailingly a very large fire is built to sleep by. Some of the wood used is so large that it often burns twenty-four hours before being entirely consumed. The amount of fuel made use of in building one camp-fire would supply an ordinary fire a week.

It is not an unfrequent occurrence, of course, for camps to take fire in this exposed situation, but some one generally discovers it in season to extinguish it by the timely application of snow or water.

Having completed our own cabin, we pro-

ceed next to construct a hovel for the oxen, which are yet behind. In erecting this, the same order in architecture is observed as in that of the camp, the timber of which it is composed, however, being much larger than that with which our own habitation is constructed. With the trunks of trees the walls are carried up nearly equal in height, leaving one side, however, lower enough than the other to give a moderate pitch to the roof, which is covered with the same kind of material as that of the camp. In the camp, for the workmen, there is no floor but the earth; the ox hovel, however, has a flooring made of small poles laid closely together, and hewed down with some degree of smoothness with the adze, and in the final finish the crevices in the walls are plastered with clay or ox manure. A temporary shed is thrown up in front, which serves as a depôt for hay and provender.

No little pains are bestowed upon the conveniences designed for the team. With the exception of sporting horses, never have I witnessed more untiring devotion to any creature than is bestowed upon the ox when under the care of a good teamster. The last thing before "turning in," he lights his lantern and repairs to the ox hovel. In the

morning, by the peep of day, and often before, his faithful visits are repeated, to hay, and provender, and card, and yoke up. No man's berth is so hard, among all the hands, as the teamster's. Every shoe and nail, every hoof and claw, and neck, yokes, chains, and sled, claim constant attention. While the rest of the hands are sitting or lounging around the liberal fire, shifting for their comfort, after exposure to the winter frosts through the day, he must repeatedly go out to look after the comfort of the sturdy, faithful ox. And then, for an hour or two in the morning again, while all, save the cook, are closing up the sweet and unbroken slumbers of the night, so welcome and necessary to the labourer, he is out amid the early frost with, I had almost said, the care of a mother, to see if "old Turk" is not loose—whether "Bright" favours the near fore-foot (which felt a little hot the day before), as he stands upon the hard floor—and then to inspect "Swan's" provender-trough, to see if he has eaten his meal, for it was carefully noted that, at the "watering-place" last night, he drank but little; while at the further end of the "tie-up" he thinks he hears a little clattering noise, and presently "Little Star" is having his shins

gently rapped, as a token of his master's wish to raise his foot to see if some nail has not given way in the loosened shoe ; and this not for once, but every day, with numberless other cares connected with his charge.

A competent hand in this profession generally calculates to do a good winter's hauling, and bring his team out in the spring in quite as good flesh as when they commenced in the early part of the season. But as in all other matters, so in this, there are exceptions to the general rule. Some teamsters spoil their cattle, and bring them out in the spring miserably poor, and nearly strained to death. Such a practice, however, cannot be regarded as either merciful or economical. So far as true policy is concerned, it is much better to keep a team well. What may be gained by hard pushing during the former part of the season will be more than made up during the latter, when the teams are moderately urged and well kept, and then you have a good team still for future labour.

Having completed our winter residences, next in order comes the business of looking out and cutting the "main," and some of the principal "branch roads." These roads, like the veins in the human body, ramify



the wilderness to all the principal "clumps" and "groves of pine" embraced in the permit.

We have here no "turnpikes" nor railways, but what is often more interesting. No pencillings can excel the graceful curves found in a main road as it winds along through the forest,—uniform in width of track, hard-beaten and glassy in its surface, polished by the sled and logs which are so frequently drawn over it. Each fall of snow, when well trodden, not unlike repeated coats of paint on a rough surface, serves to cover up the unevenness of the bottom, which in time becomes very smooth and even. And, besides, no street in all our cities is so beautifully studded with trees, whose spreading branches affectionately interlace, forming graceful archways above. Along this roadside, on the way to the landing, runs a serpentine pathway for the "knight of the goad," whose deviations are marked now outside this tree, then behind that "wind-fall," now again intercepting the main road, skipping along like a dog at one's side. To pass along this road in mid-winter, one would hardly suspect the deformities which the dissolving snows reveal in the spring—the stumps and knolls, skids and roots, with

a full share of mud-sloughs, impassable to all except man, or animals untrammelled with the harness.

In the process of making these roads, the first thing in order is to look out the best location for them. This is done by an experienced hand, who "spots" the trees where he wishes the road to be "swamped." We usually begin at the landing, and cut back toward the principal part of the timber to be hauled.

In constructing this road, first all the underbush is cut and thrown on one side; all trees standing in its range are cut close to the ground, and the trunks of prostrated trees cut off and thrown out, leaving a space from ten to twelve feet wide. The tops of the highest knolls are scraped off, and small poles, called skids, are laid across the road in the hollows between. Where a brook or slough occurs, a pole-bridge is thrown across it.

These preparatory arrangements are entered upon and executed, with a degree of interest and pleasure by lumbermen, scarcely credible to those unacquainted with such a mode of life and with such business.

## XXII.

## A NIGHT ADVENTURE ON THE MISSOURI.

AT the head of a ravine on the border of the river Platte, one bright night in June, was gathered a party of Missouri hunters, who were encamped after a day's chase for buffalo. The evening's repast was over, and as they stretched themselves in easy attitudes around their stack of rifles, each looked at the other with a kind of questioning expression, of whether it should be *sleep* or a *yarn*? The bright moon, with full round face, streamed down into their midst, and sprinkled her silvery sheen over shrub and flower, investing night in those vast solitudes with a strange charm which forbids sleep, and with common consent they raised themselves into a sitting posture and proposed a "talk," as the red skins say. Dan Elkhorn was the leader of the party, and all knew his store of

adventure inexhaustible, so a unanimous call was made upon Dan for a story. "Come, Dan," cried a crony, "give us something to laugh at, and let us break this silence, which seems to breed a spirit of melancholy—stir us up, old fellow, do!"

Dan pulled his long knife out of his belt, and laying it before him, smoothed back his long grey hair. He was a genuine specimen of the hardy American mountaineer,—like the Indian, he dressed in deer skins and wore the moccason, while every seam in his iron countenance told of 'scapes and peril. Seeing that all were attention he commenced—

"Well, draw up closer, boys, so I shan't have to holler, 'cause breth is gittin' kind a short with me now, and I want to pancel it out to last pretty strong till the wind-up hunt. You, Mike, keep your eye skinned for Ingins, 'cause ef we git deep in a yarn here, without a top eye open, the cussed varmints 'll pop on us unawars, and be stickin' some of thur quills in us—nothin' like havin' your eye open and insterments ready. I've a big idea to gin you an account of some fun I had with an old *bar*, on the Missouri, when I was a younker, and considerably more spry than I am jest now. I want to tell you fust, boys, that bars are

knowin' animals, and they kin jest tell a younker of the human kind as easily as they kin a small pig from the old sow ;—they don't fool with me now, for they've got to *know me* !

“ Well, old Alic Dennison, a neighbour of mine on the Missouri, had bin about two years up in the mountains, and when he came home he gin a treat to all the fellars within thirty miles of him—that was jest seven families—and among 'em, in course, I got an invite. Alic and I had sot our cabins on opposite sides of the drink, near enough to see each other, and a red skin, ef he'd come on a scalp visit, would a bin diskivered by either. When Alic's frolic was to cum off, I was on hand, sartain. About evenin' I got my small dug-out, and fixin' my rifle carefully in the fore eend, and stickin' my knife in the edge whar it would be handy, I jest paddled over the drink.

A little above our location thar wur a bend in the stream which a kind a turned the drift tother eend up, and planted them about the spot between our cabins—snags and sawyers, jest thar, wur dreadful plenty, and it took mity nice padlin' to git across without tiltin' ; howsever, I slid atween 'em, serpentine fashion, and got over clar as a pet coon. Thar

wur considerable folks at Alic's, fur some of the families in them diggins had about twenty in number, and the gals among 'em warn't any on your pigeon-creatures, that a fellar dassent tech fur fear of spilin' 'em, but raal scrougers—any on 'em over fourteen could lick a *bar*, easy. My decided opinion jest now is, that thur never was a grittier crowd congregated before on that stream, and sich other dancin' and drinkin' and eatin' *bar* steaks, and corn dodger, and huggin' the gals, don't happen but once in a fellar's lifetime, and scarcely that often. Old Alic had a darter Molly, that war the most enticin', gizzard-ticklin', heart-distressin' *feline* creatur that ever made a fellar git owdacious, and I seed Tom Sellers cavortin' round her like a young buffalo—he was puttin' in the biggest kind a licks in the way of courtin', and between her eyes and the sweetened whiskey he'd drank, you'd a thought the fellar would a bursted. Jest to make matters lively, I headed up alongside of Molly, and shyed a few soft things at her, sech as askin' how she liked bar steaks cooked, and if Jim Tarrant warn't equal in the elbow to a mad *panter's* tail, when he war fiddlin' that last reel, and sech amusin' light conversation. Well, boys, Tom started swellin' *instantly*. He tried to

draw her attention from me ; but I got talkin' about some new improvements I war contemplatin' about my cabin, and the cow I expected up from St. Louis, 'sides lonely feelins I'd bin havin' lately, and Tom couldn't git in a show of talk, edgeways. Didn't he git mad ?—wur you ever near enough to a panter when his *har* riz with wrath ? Well, ef you have, you can create some idea of Tom's state of mind, and how electricity, from liquor and love, run out to the eends of his head kiverin'. It wur easy to see he wur a gittin' dangerous, so I slid off and left him alone with the gal. Arter I got a talkin' to another one of the settlers' young women, Molly kept lookin' at me, and every now and then sayin' somethin' pleasin' across to me, while she warn't payin' any attention to Tom at all. He spread himself into a stiff bow and left her ; then movin' across the floor like a wounded deer, he steadied himself on the back of my seat, and lookin' me in the face, says :

“ ‘ *Mister Elkhorn*, I shud be strenuously obleeged to you ef you'll step down thar with me by the old persimmen tree.’ ”

“ I nodded my head, and told him to trot outside and wait till I got the docyments, and as soon as he moved I sent his old *daddy*

to accompany him. I jest informed the old fellar that Tom wanted a fight, and as he was too full of corn juice to cut carefully, I didn't want to take advantage of him. The old man said he was obleeged to me, and moved out. Tom, thinkin' it wur me, staggered ahead of the old man, and I concluded, as it war near mornin', to leave; 'cause I knew when Tom found out his daddy was along with him instead of me, he'd have a fight any how. I acknowledge the corn, boys, that when I started my track warn't anythin' like a *bee-line*;—the sweeten'd whiskey had made me powerful thick-legged; but arter a fashion I got to my dug-out, with nothin' of weapon along in the world but the paddle. Thar war jest enough light to tell that snags wur plenty, and jest enough corn juice inside to make a fellar not care a cuss fur 'em. I felt strong as a hoss, too, and the dug-out hadn't more'n leaped six lengths from the bank afore—*zip—chug—co-souse* I went—the front eend jest lifted itself agin a sawyer and emptied me into the *element*! In about a second I came up bang agin a snag, and I guess I grabbed it sudden, while old Missouri curl'd and purl'd around me as ef she was in a hurry to git to the mouth, so she might muddy the Massissippi. I warn't much



skeer'd, but still I didn't jest like to hang on thar till daylight, and I didn't want to make a fuss fur fear they'd say I war skary. I had sot myself on the eend of the snag, and was jest tryin' to cypher out some way of gettin' to shore, when I thought I diskiver'd a fellar sittin' on the bank. At fust, he looked so black in the coat I thought it war Tom Sellers, who'd sot himself down to wait fur a fight:—Tom had on at the frolic a black blanket coat with a velvet collar, and he thought it particularly nice. Arter lookin' at him move about and sit down on his hunkers once or twice, I thought I'd holler to him; but he appeared so dreadful drunk that I didn't expect much help from him.

“ ‘Tom,’ shouted I, ‘come out here with a dug-out, and help a fellar off, will you?’ ”

“ He sot still, without sayin' a word. ‘Well,’ says I to him, ‘you’re meaner than an Ingin! and would bait a trap with your daddy’s leggins.’ He didn’t move fur a spell; at last into the drink he popped, and now, thought I, he *is* mad and *no* dispute. I could see him paddlin’ right fur me, and I holler’d to him that I had no insterments, but he didn’t say a whisper, ony shoved along the faster. At last up he come agin my snag, and the next minit he reached fur me, and

then he tried to fix his teeth into my moccasoon ; so guessin' it war time to do somethin', I jest grabbed fur his muzzle, and I'm blessed, boys, ef it warn't a great *he bar* ! The cussed varmint had watched me from the house and seed I had no weapons, and when I upsot he just counted me his'n, and was quietly calculatin' on the bank how he'd best git me out of the water. I had nothin' in the yearth but a small fancy penknife, but I stuck that in him so quick that he let me go, and while he swam for one snag I reached for another. I never heard a bar laugh out loud afore, but I'm a sucker ef he didn't snigger twice at the way he rolled me off my log.

" We sot lookin' at one another fur a spell, when I seed the varmint gittin' ready to call on me agin, and in about a second more off he dropped, and strait he took a shute for my location. As he came up close to me I slit his ear with the small blade, and he got mad ; but jest as he was circling round me to git a good hold, I dropped on to his hinder eend and grabbed his har, and I guess I made him move fur shore a leetle faster than a steamboat—my little blade kept him dreadful *itchy*. Well, the fun of the thing wur, boys, as soon as the varmint teched shore, he turned right round on me, and I'm cussed if I hadn't to

turn round too, and scratch for the snag agin ! with that consarned *bar* feelin' my legs with his paw every stroke I war makin' to git away from him ! I got a little skary now, and a good deal mad, fur thar the varmint war a waitin' for me, and whinin' as ef he had been ill-treated, and thar I wur perched up on a sawyer, bobbin' up and down in the water. At last I sot a hollerin' and kept on at it, and hollered louder, until I seed some one cum from the house, and singin' out agin they answered me. I asked who it war, and found that it war Molly, old Alic's darter ; so I gin her a description of my siteaytion, and she war into a dug-out in a minit, and paddlin' towards me. I believe I said wonce, boys, that bars wur knowin' critters, but ef thar's anythin' true on this yearth, it's the fact, that this consarned animal had made up his mind to upsot that gal, and I'm blessed ef he didn't jest as cute as ef he'd bin human ! Startin' from his snag he swam to the dug-out, put up both paws, and over it went—over went Molly into the stream, and off slid Mister *bar*, laffin' out *loud* ! as I'm a white man.

“I seized Molly as she came floatin' towards me, and stuck her upon my sawyer, while I started for an adjinin' snag. I could

hear Molly grittin' her teeth, she war so bilin' mad, and jest as soon as she could git breath, she hollered to me to be sure I never rested till I killed that varmint. I swore on that snag that I'd grow thin chasin' the critter, and she seemed to git pacified. Well, thar we wur, in the stream, and it a leetle too rough to swim in easy, so we had to sing out for help, and I yelled till I war nigh onto hoarse, afore anythin' livin' stirred about the house; at last, nigger Jake came down to the edge of the river, jest as day was breakin', and puttin' his hand over his eyes, he hollers—

“ ‘Why, Massa Dan, is dat you wot's been hollowin' eber so long for somebody!’

“ ‘You've jest took the notion to cum see, have you, you lazy nigger—now git a dug-out and come out here and git your missus and me off these snags, and do it quick too, or I'll make *you* holler!’

“ ‘What, Missus dar *too*!’ shouted the nigger, ‘well, dat's funny—de Lor!’ and off the cussed blueskin started fur the house, and in a few minits all that could gethered out to see us and laugh at our water locations.

“I had bin gittin' riled by degrees, and now was at a dangerous pint—the steam began to rise off on me till thar wur a small

fog above my head, and as the half-drunken varmints roared a laffin, and cracked their jokes about our courtin' in the middle of the drink, I got awful excited. 'I'll make ribbons of every man among you,' says I, 'when I git whar thar's a chance to fight.' And then the cussed crew roared the louder. Tom Sellers yelled out that we'd bin tryin' to *elope*, and this made Molly mad,—her daddy got a little mad too, and I bein' already mad, thar wur a wrathy trio on us, and the old fellow said, ef he thought I'd been playin' a two-faced game, and bitin' his friendship like a pizen varmint, he'd drop me off the log I wur on with a ball from his rifle. I jest told him to fire away and be d—d, for I wur wore out a patience. Some of the boys held him, while others got the dug-out and came to our assistance. I jest got them to drop me on my side of the river, and to send over my rifle, and as soon as it war on hand I onloosed my dog Yelp, and started to wipe out my disgrace.

"That infernal bar, as soon as he'd tossed Molly in the stream, started for the woods; but, as ef he had reasoned on the chances, the varmint came to the conclusion that he couldn't git away, and so got up into a crotch of a low tree, about a quarter of a mile from

my cabin. Old Yelp smelled him, and as soon as I clapped peeper on him I let sliver, when the varmint dropped like a log,—I went to him and found he'd bin dead for an hour. My little blade couldn't a killed him, so it's my opinion, clearly entertained, that the owdacious varmint, knowin' I'd kill him for his trick, jest climbed up thar whar I could easy find him, and died to spite me!

“His hide, and hard swearin', got me and Molly out of our elopin' scrape, and the lickin' I gin Tom Sellers that spring has made us good friends ever sence. He don't wonce ventur' to say anythin' about that *bar scrape*, without my permission!”

## XXIII.

## THE SETTLER'S LOG-HOUSE.

WHERE was I? as the *causeurs impitoyables* always say. Oh! telling of our dinner in the woods.

When all was done, the cold beef and its attendant pickles,—the pies and the cake and the huge loaf were returned “each to the niche it was ordained to fill” in the champagne basket that served to hold our treasures. The little tin pail of butter, which had been carefully placed in the water, was now re-wrapped in its shroud of fresh leaves, and we set forth again, but under a threatening aspect of the heavens. We had been so amused watching Leo’s gambols in the still transparent water, that we had not noticed the gathering clouds, which now grew apace thicker and heavier than we could have desired. Nevertheless on we

went, and at a good pace, for our steeds had been as well refreshed as ourselves, and seemed to understand beside that there might be reasonable ground for haste. Not a house was to be descried, for in the back route we had chosen, settlers are few and scattered, and much of the road lay through tracts of untouched timber, where one was obliged sometimes to take good heed of the great H hacked on the trees by the surveyor's axe, to be sure that we were on the Highway.

And now the rain came down in earnest. No pattering drops—no warning sprinkle—but a sudden deluge, which wet everything through in half a minute. Onward, good prince!—*en avant*, quicksilver! (for thou art of French extraction) shining and smoking as ye are, with torrents streaming down your innocent noses, adopt David Crocket's motto, so often quoted and acted upon by our compatriots—"Go ahead!" If bonnets and veils—if gingham and broadcloth or their wearers find any favour in your eyes, let not water extinguish your fire! Think of our soaking bread! Think of your own swimming oats, and, as ye love not "spoonvittles," hasten.

The rain spatters up from the rail-fences



so as to create a small fog on every rail. The puddles in the road look as if they were boiling, and the sky seems to grow more ponderous as it discharges its burden. We have emerged upon a clearing, and there is a liquid sheet between us and the distant woods.

But there is a roof! I see a stick chimney! and there is a drenched cow crowding in beneath a strawy barrack, and some forlorn fowls huddled under an old cart. We approach the habitations of men, and we may not doubt a good fire and a kind welcome,—so forward, good steeds!

The log-house proved a small one, and, though its neat corn-crib and chicken-coop of slender poles bespoke a careful gudeman, we found no gate in front, but in its stead great awkward bars which were to be taken down or climbed over; and either of these is no pleasant process in a pouring rain. But by the aid of a little patience we made our way into the house, which had only a back door, as is very usual among the early settlers.

Within, marks of uncomfortable—though strictly neat and decent—poverty were but too evident. No well-stored dresser—no snug curtains—no shining tins—no gorgeous piece-work bed-quilts, exhibiting stars of all

magnitudes and moons in all quarters. Not even the usual display of Sunday habiliments graced the bare log walls. The good woman was of a shadowy thinness, and her husband, with a green shade over his eyes, wore a downcast and desponding air. One little girl, with her yellow hair done up in many a papillote, sat in a corner playing with a kitten. The mother put down her knitting as we entered, but the father seemed to have been sitting in listless idleness.

We were received with that free and hospitable welcome so general among the pioneers of the west. Our wet garments were carefully disposed for drying, and even the buffalo-robcs and blankets found place on those slender poles which are usually observable above the ample fireplace of a regular log-hut; placed there for the purpose of drying—sometimes the week's wash, when the weather proves rainy—sometimes whole rows of slender circlets of pumpkins for next spring's pies—sometimes (when we can get them) festoons of sliced apples. The rain gave no sign of truce; the eaves poured incessantly, and we heard the rumbling of distant thunder. There was every prospect that we should be constrained to become unwilling intruders on the kindness of Mr. Gaston and his family, for the night at least.

When this was mentioned, the good woman, after expressing her willingness to do the very best she could for us, could not forbear telling us there *had been* a time when she could have entertained us decently under such circumstances. "But those days are gone bye," she said, with a sigh; "trouble has followed us so long that I don't look for anything else now. We left a good home in York state, because my old man couldn't feel contented when he saw the neighbours selling out and coming to the west to get rich. And we bought so much land that we hadn't enough left to stock it, and improve it; but after a while we had got a few acres under improvement, and begun to have enough for our own consumption, although nothing to sell, and we had to part with some of our land to pay taxes on the rest—and then we took our pay in wild-cat money, that turned to waste paper before we got it off our hands. And my husband took on dreadful hard upon that—and we all had the ague—and then his eyes took sore—and he is almost blind—too blind to see to work more than half the time. So we've been getting down, down, down! But I needn't cry," said the poor creature, wiping her eyes, "for I'm sure if tears could have bettered

our condition, we'd have been well off long ago."

Here was an apology for poverty, indeed! How many complain of poverty, sitting in silks and laces, at tables covered with abundance! What groans over "hard times" have we not heard from jewelled bosoms within these two or three years! What rebuffs are always ready for those who take upon themselves the pleasant office of soliciting of the superfluity of the rich for the necessities of the poor! "Hard times!" say the unthinking children of luxury, as they sip their ice-cream, or hold up to the light the rosy wine!

This log-cabin, with its civil and respectable inhabitants, would furnish a lesson for such economists, if, indeed, they were willing to learn of the poor to appreciate the over-abounding comforts of their lot.

Our hostess was a very active and tidy person, and she busied herself in all those little offices which evince a desire to make guests feel welcome. She had small change of garments to offer, but she was unwearied in turning and drying before the fire such as we could dispense with for the time; for we hoped the storm would be but shortlived, and did not wish to open our trunks until

we stopped for the night. The rain, however, slackened not; but, on the contrary, frequent flashes of lightning, and a muttering thunder—which seemed momentarily to draw nearer—threatened still longer detention. The eaves poured merrily, and it was amusing to see our little hostess, with an old cloak over her head, fly out to place tubs, pails, jars, basins, and milk-pans, so as to intercept as much as much as possible of the falling treasure, intimating that, as soap was pretty scarce, she must try to catch rain-water, any how. A trough, scooped from the portly trunk of a large white-wood tree, was so placed as to save all that fell from one side of the roof, but on the other almost all the utensils of the house were arranged by the careful dame, who made frequent trips for the purpose of exchanging the full for the empty—apologizing for not calling upon “th’ old man” to assist her, because getting wet might increase the inflammation of his eyes.

Mrs. Gaston had carried out her last milk-pail and was returning to the door, when the sound of wheels was heard above the rattling of the storm; and in another moment a loud “Hilloa!” told that other travellers beside ourselves were about to seek shelter.

“I’ll tell ’em to drive on to Jericho,”

said Mrs. Gaston, "for we can't make them any ways comfortable here." "What ! two mile further in this rain !" rejoined her husband ; no, no, that'll never do. The shower won't last long ; let 'em come in." And he would take his great straw hat and go out to invite in this new windfall.

END VOL. I.







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